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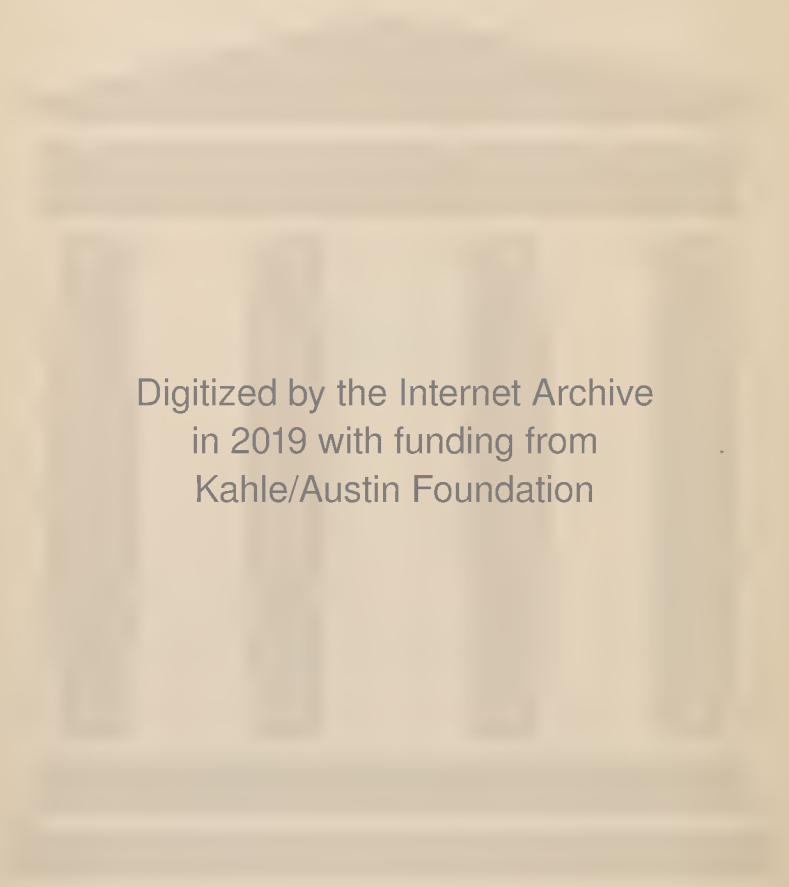
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KENELM CHILLINGLY



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HIS

ADVENTURES AND OPINIONS

BY

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(LORD LYTTON)

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KENELM CHILLINGLY.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, of Exmundham, Baronet, F.R.S. and F.A.S., was the representative of an ancient family, and a landed proprietor of some importance. He had married young; not from any ardent inclination for the connubial state, but in compliance with the request of his parents. They took the pains to select his bride; and if they might have chosen better they might have chosen worse, which is more than can be said for many men who choose wives for themselves. Miss Caroline Brotherton was in all respects a suitable connection. She had a pretty fortune, which was of much use in buying a couple of farms, long desiderated by the Chillinglys as necessary for the rounding of their property into a ringfence. She was highly connected, and brought into the county that experience of fashionable life acquired by a young lady who has attended a course of balls for three seasons, and gone out in matrimonial honours, with credit to herself and her chaperon. She was handsome enough to satisfy a husband's pride, but not so handsome as to keep perpetually on the *qui vive* a husband's jealousy. She was considered highly accomplished; that is, she played upon the pianoforte so that any musician would say she "was very well taught;" but no

musician would go out of his way to hear her a second time. She painted in water-colours—well enough to amuse herself. She knew French and Italian with an elegance so lady-like that, without having read more than selected extracts from authors in those languages, she spoke them both with an accent more correct than we have any reason to attribute to Rousseau or Ariosto. What else a young lady may acquire in order to be styled highly accomplished I do not pretend to know; but I am sure that the young lady in question fulfilled that requirement in the opinion of the best masters. It was not only an eligible match for Sir Peter Chillingly,—it was a brilliant match. It was also a very unexceptionable match for Miss Caroline Brotherton. This excellent couple got on together as most excellent couples do. A short time after marriage, Sir Peter, by the death of his parents—who, having married their heir, had nothing left in life worth the trouble of living for—succeeded to the hereditary estates; he lived for nine months of the year at Exmundham, going to town for the other three months. Lady Chillingly and himself were both very glad to go to town, being bored at Exmundham; and very glad to go back to Exmundham, being bored in town. With one exception it was an exceedingly happy marriage, as marriages go. Lady Chillingly had her way in small things; Sir Peter his way in great. Small things happen every day, great things once in three years. Once in three years Lady Chillingly gave way to Sir Peter; households so managed go on regularly. The exception to their connubial happiness was, after all, but of a negative description. Their affection was such that they sighed for a pledge of it; fourteen years had he and Lady Chillingly remained unvisited by the little stranger.

Now, in default of male issue, Sir Peter's estates passed to a distant cousin as heir-at-law; and during the last four years this heir-at-law had evinced his belief that practically speaking, he was already heir-apparent; and (though Sir Peter was a much younger man than himself, and as healthy as any man well can be) had made his expectations of a speedy succession unpleasantly conspicuous. He had refused his consent to a small exchange of lands with a neighbouring squire,

by which Sir Peter would have obtained some good arable land, for an outlying unprofitable wood that produced nothing but faggots and rabbits, with the blunt declaration that he, the heir-at-law, was fond of rabbit-shooting, and that the wood would be convenient to him next season if he came into the property by that time, which he very possibly might. He disputed Sir Peter's right to make his customary fall of timber, and had even threatened him with a bill in Chancery on that subject. In short, this heir-at-law was exactly one of those persons to spite whom a landed proprietor would, if single, marry at the age of eighty in the hope of a family.

Nor was it only on account of his very natural wish to frustrate the expectations of this unamiable relation, that Sir Peter Chillingly lamented the absence of the little stranger. Although belonging to that class of country gentlemen to whom certain political reasoners deny the intelligence vouchsafed to other members of the community, Sir Peter was not without a considerable degree of book-learning, and a great taste for speculative philosophy. He sighed for a legitimate inheritor to the stores of his erudition, and, being a very benevolent man, for a more active and useful dispenser of those benefits to the human race which philosophers confer by striking hard against each other; just as, how full soever of sparks a flint may be, they might lurk concealed in the flint till doomsday, if the flint were not hit by the steel. Sir Peter, in short, longed for a son amply endowed with the combative quality, in which he himself was deficient, but which is the first essential to all seekers after renown, and especially to benevolent philosophers.

Under these circumstances one may well conceive the joy that filled the household of Exmundham and extended to all the tenantry on that venerable estate, by whom the present possessor was much beloved, and the prospect of an heir-at-law with a special eye to the preservation of rabbits much destested, when the medical attendant of the Chillinglys declared that 'her ladyship was in an interesting way;' and to what height that joy culminated when, in due course of time, a male baby was safely enthroned in his cradle. To that cradle Sir Peter was summoned. He entered the room with a lively

bound and a radiant countenance : he quitted it with a musing step and an overclouded brow.

Yet the baby was no monster. It did not come into the world with two heads, as some babies are said to have done ; it was formed as babies are in general—was on the whole a thriving baby, a fine baby. Nevertheless, its aspect awed the father as already it had awed the nurse. The creature looked so unutterably solemn. It fixed its eyes upon Sir Peter with a melancholy reproachful stare ; its lips were compressed and drawn downward as if discontentedly meditating its future destinies. The nurse declared in a frightened whisper that it had uttered no cry on facing the light. It had taken possession of its cradle in all the dignity of silent sorrow. A more saddened and a more thoughtful countenance a human being could not exhibit if he were leaving the world instead of entering it.

“ Hem ! ” said Sir Peter to himself on regaining the solitude of his library ; “ a philosopher who contributes a new inhabitant to this vale of tears takes upon himself very anxious responsibilities——”

At that moment the joy-bells rang out from the neighbouring church tower, the summer sun shone into the windows, the bees hummed among the flowers on the lawn : Sir Peter roused himself and looked forth—“ After all,” said he, cheerily, “ the vale of tears is not without a smile.”

CHAPTER II.

A FAMILY council was held at Exmundham Hall to deliberate on the name by which this remarkable infant should be admitted into the Christian community. The junior branches of that ancient house consisted, first, of the obnoxious heir-at-law—a Scotch branch named Chillingly Gordon. He was the widowed father of one son, now of the age of three, and happily unconscious of the injury inflicted on his future prospects by the

advent of the new-born ; which could not be truthfully said of his Caledonian father. Mr. Chillingly Gordon was one of those men who get on in the world without our being able to discover why. His parents died in his infancy and left him nothing ; but the family interest procured him an admission into the Charterhouse School, at which illustrious academy he obtained no remarkable distinction. Nevertheless, as soon as he left it the State took him under its special care, and appointed him to a clerkship in a public office. From that moment he continued to get on in the world, and was now a Commissioner of Customs, with a salary of 1500*l.* a year. As soon as he had been thus enabled to maintain a wife, he selected a wife who assisted to maintain himself. She was an Irish peer's widow, with a jointure of 2000*l.* a-year.

A few months after his marriage, Chillingly Gordon effected insurances on his wife's life, so as to secure himself an annuity of 1000*l.* a-year in case of her decease. As she appeared to be a fine healthy woman, some years younger than her husband, the deduction from his income effected by the annual payments for the insurance seemed an over-sacrifice of present enjoyment to future contingencies. The result bore witness to his reputation for sagacity, as the lady died in the second year of their wedding, a few months after the birth of her only child, and of a heart-disease which had been latent to the doctors, but which, no doubt, Gordon had affectionately discovered before he had insured a life too valuable not to need some compensation for its loss. He was now, then, in the possession of 2500*l.* a-year, and was therefore very well off, in the pecuniary sense of the phrase. He had, moreover, acquired a reputation which gave him a social rank beyond that accorded to him by a discerning State. He was considered a man of solid judgment, and his opinion upon all matters, private and public, carried weight. The opinion itself, critically examined, was not worth much, but the way he announced it was imposing. Mr. Fox said that 'No one ever was so wise as Lord Thurlow looked.' Lord Thurlow could not have looked wiser than Mr. Chillingly Gordon. He had a square jaw and large red bushy eyebrows, which he lowered down with great effect when he delivered

judgment. He had another advantage for acquiring grave reputation. He was a very unpleasant man. He could be rude if you contradicted him; and as few persons wish to provoke rudeness, so he was seldom contradicted.

Mr. Chillingly Mivers, another cadet of the house, was also distinguished, but in a different way. He was a bachelor, now about the age of thirty-five. He was eminent for a supreme well-bred contempt for everybody and everything. He was the originator and chief proprietor of a public journal called *The Londoner*, which had lately been set up on that principle of contempt, and we need not say, was exceedingly popular with those leading members of the community who admire nobody and believe in nothing. Mr. Chillingly Mivers was regarded by himself and by others as a man who might have achieved the highest success in any branch of literature, if he had deigned to exhibit his talents therein. But he did not so deign, and therefore he had full right to imply that, if he had written an epic, a drama, a novel, a history, a metaphysical treatise, Milton, Shakspeare, Cervantes, Hume, Berkeley would have been nowhere. He held greatly to the dignity of the anonymous; and even in the journal which he originated, nobody could ever ascertain what he wrote. But, at all events, Mr. Chillingly Mivers was what Mr. Chillingly Gordon was not—viz. a very clever man, and by no means an unpleasant one in general society.

The Rev. John Stalworth Chillingly was a decided adherent to the creed of what is called 'muscular Christianity,' and a very fine specimen of it too. A tall stout man with broad shoulders, and that division of lower limb which intervenes between the knee and the ankle powerfully developed. He would have knocked down a deist as soon as looked at him. It is told by the Sieur de Joinville, in his Memoir of Louis, the sainted king, that an assembly of divines and theologians convened the Jews of an oriental city for the purpose of arguing with them on the truths of Christianity, and a certain knight, who was at that time crippled, and supporting himself on crutches, asked and obtained permission to be present at the debate. The Jews flocked to the summons, when a prelate,

electing a learned rabbi, mildly put to him the leading question whether he owned the divine conception of our Lord. "Certainly not," replied the rabbi; whereon the pious knight, shocked by such blasphemy, uplifted his crutch and felled the rabbi, and then flung himself among the other misbelievers, whom he soon dispersed in ignominious flight and in a very belaboured condition. The conduct of the knight was reported to the sainted king, with a request that it should be properly reprimanded; but the sainted king delivered himself of this wise judgment:—

"If a pious knight is a very learned clerk, and can meet in fair argument the doctrines of the misbeliever, by all means let him argue fairly; but if a pious knight is not a learned clerk, and the argument goes against him, then let the pious knight cut the discussion short by the edge of his good sword."

The Rev. John Stalworth Chillingly was of the same opinion as St. Louis; otherwise, he was a mild and amiable man. He encouraged cricket and other manly sports among his rural parishioners. He was a skilful and bold rider but he did not hunt; a convivial man—and took his bottle freely. But his tastes in literature were of a refined and peaceful character, contrasting therein the tendencies some might have expected from his muscular development of Christianity. He was a great reader of poetry, but he disliked Scott and Byron, whom he considered flashy and noisy; he maintained that Pope was only a versifier, and that the greatest poet in the language was Wordsworth; he did not care much for the ancient classics; he refused all merit to the French poets; he knew nothing of the Italian, but he dabbled in German, and was inclined to bore one about the *Hermann and Dorothea* of Goethe. He was married to a homely little wife, who revered him in silence, and thought there would be no schism in the Church if he were in his right place as Archbishop of Canterbury; in this opinion he entirely agreed with his wife.

Besides these three male specimens of the Chillingly race, the fairer sex was represented, in the absence of her ladyship, who still kept her room, by three female Chillinglys—sisters of Sir Peter—and all three spinsters. Perhaps one reason why they had remained single was, that externally they were

so like each other that a suitor must have been puzzled which to choose, and may have been afraid that if he did choose one, he should be caught next day kissing another one in mistake. They were all tall, all thin, with long throats—and beneath the throats a fine development of bone. They had all pale hair, pale eyelids, pale eyes, and pale complexions. They all dressed exactly alike, and their favourite colour was a vivid green: they were so dressed on this occasion.

As there was such similitude in their persons, so, to an ordinary observer, they were exactly the same in character and mind. Very well behaved, with proper notions of female decorum—very distant and reserved in manner to strangers—very affectionate to each other and their relations or favourites—very good to the poor, whom they looked upon as a different order of creation, and treated with that sort of benevolence which humane people bestow upon dumb animals. Their minds had been nourished on the same books—what one read the others had read. The books were mainly divided into two classes—novels, and what they called “good books.” They had a habit of taking a specimen of each alternately—one day a novel, then a good book, then a novel again, and so on. Thus if the imagination was overwarmed on Monday, on Tuesday it was cooled down to a proper temperature; and if frost-bitten on Tuesday, it took a tepid bath on Wednesday. The novels they chose were indeed rarely of a nature to raise the intellectual thermometer into blood heat: the heroes and heroines were models of correct conduct. Mr. James’s novels were then in vogue, and they united in saying that those “*were* novels a father might allow his daughters to read.” But though an ordinary observer might have failed to recognise any distinction between these three ladies, and, finding them habitually dressed in green, would have said they were as much alike as one pea is to another, they had their idiosyncratic differences, when duly examined. Miss Margaret, the eldest, was the commanding one of the three; it was she who regulated their household (they all lived together), kept the joint purse, and decided every doubtful point that arose,—whether they should or should not ask Mrs. So-and-so to tea

—whether Mary should or should not be discharged—whether or not they should go to Broadstairs or to Sandgate for the month of October. In fact, Miss Margaret was the WILL of the body corporate.

Miss Sibyl was of milder nature and more melancholy temperament; she had a poetic turn of mind, and occasionally wrote verses. Some of these had been printed on satin paper, and sold for objects of beneficence at charity bazaars. The county newspapers said that the verses “were characterised by all the elegance of a cultured and feminine mind.” The other two sisters agreed that Sibyl was the genius of the household, but, like all geniuses, not sufficiently practical for the world. Miss Sarah Chillingly, the youngest of the three, and now just in her forty-fourth year, was looked upon by the others as ‘a dear thing, inclined to be naughty, but such a darling that nobody could have the heart to scold her.’ Miss Margaret said ‘she was a giddy creature.’ Miss Sibyl wrote a poem on her, entitled—

“Warning to a young Lady against the Pleasures of the World.”

They all called her Sally; the other two sisters had no diminutive synonyms. Sally is a name indicative of fastness. But this Sally would not have been thought fast in another household, and she was now little likely to sally out of the one she belonged to. These sisters, who were all many years older than Sir Peter, lived in a handsome, old-fashioned, red-brick house, with a large garden at the back, in the principal street of the capital of their native county. They had each 10,000*l.* for portion; and if he could have married all three, the heir-at-law would have married them, and settled the aggregate 30,000*l.* on himself. But we have not yet come to recognise Mormonism as legal, though if our social progress continues to slide in the same grooves as at present, Heaven only knows what triumphs over the prejudices of our ancestors may not be achieved by the wisdom of our descendants!

CHAPTER III.

SIR PETER stood on his hearthstone, surveyed the guests seated in semicircle, and said: "Friends,—in Parliament, before anything affecting the fate of a Bill is discussed, it is, I believe, necessary to introduce the Bill." He paused a moment, rang the bell, and said to the servant who entered, "Tell nurse to bring in the Baby."

MR. GORDON CHILLINGLY.—"I don't see the necessity for that, Sir Peter. We may take the existence of the Baby for granted."

MR. MIVERS.—"It is an advantage to the reputation of Sir Peter's work to preserve the incognito. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*"

THE REV. JOHN STALWORTH CHILLINGLY. — "I don't approve the cynical levity of such remarks. Of course we must all be anxious to see, in the earliest stage of being, the future representative of our name and race. Who would not wish to contemplate the source, however small, of the Tigris or the Nile!——"

MISS SALLY (tittering).—"He! he!"

MISS MARGARET.—"For shame, you giddy thing!"

The Baby enters in the nurse's arms. All rise and gather round the Baby with one exception—Mr. Gordon, who has ceased to be heir-at-law.

The Baby returned the gaze of its relations with the most contemptuous indifference. Miss Sibyl was the first to pronounce an opinion on the Baby's attributes. Said she, in a solemn whisper—"What a heavenly mournful expression! it seems so grieved to have left the angels!"

THE REV. JOHN.—"That is prettily said, cousin Sibyl; but the infant must pluck up its courage and fight its way among mortals with a good heart, if it wants to get back to the angels again. And I think it will; a fine child." He took it from the nurse, and moving it deliberately up and down, as if to

weigh it, said cheerfully, "Monstrous heavy! by the time it is twenty it will be a match for a prizefighter of fifteen stone!"

Therewith he strode to Gordon, who as if to show that he now considered himself wholly apart from all interest in the affairs of a family who had so ill-treated him in the birth of that Baby, had taken up the *Times* newspaper and concealed his countenance beneath the ample sheet. The Parson abruptly snatched away the *Times* with one hand, and, with the other substituting to the indignant eyes of the *ci-devant* heir-at-law the spectacle of the Baby, said, "Kiss it."

"Kiss it!" echoed Chillingly Gordon, pushing back his chair—"kiss it! pooh, sir, stand off! I never kissed my own baby; I shall not kiss another man's. Take the thing away, sir; it is ugly; it has black eyes."

Sir Peter, who was near-sighted, put on his spectacles and examined the face of the new-born. "True," said he, "it has black eyes—very extraordinary—portentous; the first Chillingly that ever had black eyes."

"Its mamma has black eyes," said Miss Margaret; "it takes after its mamma; it has not the fair beauty of the Chillinglys, but it is not ugly."

"Sweet infant!" sighed Sibyl; "and so good—does not cry."

"It has neither cried nor crowed since it was born," said the nurse; "bless its little heart."

She took the Baby from the Parson's arms, and smoothed back the frill of its cap, which had got ruffled.

"You may go now, nurse," said Sir Peter.

CHAPTER IV.

"I AGREE with Mr. Shandy," said Sir Peter, resuming his stand on the hearthstone, "that among the responsibilities of a parent, the choice of a name which his child is to bear for life is one of the gravest. And this is especially so with those

who belong to the order of baronets. In the case of a peer his Christian name, fused into his titular designation, disappears. In the case of a Mister, if his baptismal be cacophonous or provocative of ridicule, he need not ostentatiously parade it; he may drop it altogether on his visiting cards, and may be imprinted as Mr. Jones instead of Mr. Ebenezer Jones. In his signature, save where the forms of the law demand Ebenezer in full, he may only use an initial, and be your obedient servant E. Jones, leaving it to be conjectured that E. stands for Edward or Ernest—names inoffensive, and not suggestive of a Dissenting Chapel, like Ebenezer. If a man called Edward or Ernest be detected in some youthful indiscretion, there is no indelible stain on his moral character; but if an Ebenezer be so detected he is set down as a hypocrite—it produces that shock on the public mind which is felt when a professed saint is proved to be a bit of a sinner. But a baronet never can escape from his baptismal—it cannot lie *perdu*, it cannot shrink into an initial, it stands forth glaringly in the light of day; christen him Ebenezer, and he is Sir Ebenezer in full, with all its perilous consequences if he ever succumb to those temptations to which even baronets are exposed. But, my friends, it is not only the effect that the sound of a name has upon others which is to be thoughtfully considered; the effect that his name produces on the man himself is perhaps still more important. Some names stimulate and encourage the owner, others deject and paralyse him; I am a melancholy instance of that truth. Peter has been for many generations, as you are aware, the baptismal to which the eldest-born of our family has been devoted. On the altar of that name I have been sacrificed. Never has there been a Sir Peter Chillingly who has, in any way, distinguished himself above his fellows. That name has been a dead weight on my intellectual energies. In the catalogue of illustrious Englishmen there is, I think, no immortal Sir Peter, except Sir Peter Teazle, and he only exists on the comic stage.”

MISS SIBYL.—“Sir Peter Lely?”

SIR PETER CHILLINGLY.—“That painter was not an Englishman. He was born in Westphalia, famous for hams. I confine my remarks to the children of our native land. I am aware

that in foreign countries the name is not an extinguisher to the genius of its owner. But why? In other countries its sound is modified. Pierre Corneille was a great man; but I put it to you whether, had he been an Englishman, he could have been the father of European tragedy as Peter Crow?"

MISS SIBYL.—"Impossible!"

MISS SALLY.—"He! he!"

MISS MARGARET.—"There is nothing to laugh at, you giddy child!"

SIR PETER.—"My son shall not be petrified into Peter."

MR. GORDON CHILLINGLY.—"If a man is such a fool—and I don't say your son will not be a fool, Cousin Peter—as to be influenced by the sound of his own name, and you want the booby to turn the world topsy-turvy, you had better call him Julius Cæsar, or Hannibal, or Attila, or Charlemagne."

SIR PETER (who excels mankind in imperturbability of temper).—"On the contrary, if you inflict upon a man the burthen of one of those names, the glory of which he cannot reasonably expect to eclipse or even to equal, you crush him beneath the weight. If a poet were called John Milton or William Shakespeare, he could not dare to publish even a sonnet. No; the choice of a name lies between the two extremes of ludicrous insignificance and oppressive renown. For this reason I have ordered the family pedigree to be suspended on yonder wall. Let us examine it with care, and see whether, among the Chillinglys themselves or their alliances, we can discover a name that can be borne with becoming dignity by the destined head of our house—a name neither too light nor too heavy."

Sir Peter here led the way to the family tree—a goodly roll of parchment, with the arms of the family emblazoned at the top. Those arms were simple, as ancient heraldic coats are—three fishes *argent* on a field *azur*; the crest a mermaid's head. All flocked to inspect the pedigree except Mr. Gordon, who resumed the *Times* newspaper.

"I never could quite make out what kind of fishes these are," said the Rev. John Stalworth. "They are certainly not pike which formed the emblematic blazon of the Hotofts, and

are still grim enough to frighten future Shakespeares, on the scutcheon of the Warwickshire Lucys."

"I believe they are tenches," said Mr. Mivers. "The tench is a fish that knows how to keep itself safe, by a philosophical taste for an obscure existence in deep holes and slush."

SIR PETER.—"No Mivers; the fishes are dace, a fish that, once introduced into any pond, never can be got out again. You may drag the water—you may let off the water—you may say, 'Those dace are extirpated,'—vain thought!—the dace reappear as before; and in this respect the arms are really emblematic of the family. All the disorders and revolutions that have occurred in England since the Heptarchy have left the Chillinglys the same race in the same place. Somehow or other the Norman Conquest did not despoil them; they held fiefs under Eudo Dapifer as peacefully as they had held them under King Harold; they took no part in the Crusades, nor the Wars of the Roses, nor the Civil Wars between Charles the First and the Parliament. As the dace sticks to the water, and the water sticks by the dace, so the Chillinglys stuck to the land and the land stuck by the Chillinglys. Perhaps I am wrong to wish that the new Chillingly may be a little less like a dace."

"Oh!" cried Miss Margaret, who, mounted on a chair, had been inspecting the pedigree through an eye-glass, "I don't see a fine Christian name from the beginning, except Oliver."

SIR PETER.—"That Chillingly was born in Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate, and named Oliver in compliment to him, as his father, born in the reign of James I., was christened James. The three fishes always swam with the stream. Oliver!—Oliver not a bad name, but significant of radical doctrines."

MR. MIVERS.—"I don't think so. Oliver Cromwell made short work of radicals and their doctrines; but perhaps we can find a name less awful and revolutionary."

"I have it—I have it," cried the Parson. "Here is a descent from Sir Kenelm Digby and Venetia Stanley. Sir Kenelm Digby! No finer specimen of muscular Christianity. He fought as well as he wrote;—eccentric, it is true, but always a gentleman. Call the boy Kenelm!"

"A sweet name," said Miss Sibyl—"it breathes of romance."

"Sir Kenelm Chillingly! It sounds well—imposing!" said Miss Margaret.

"And," remarked Mr. Mivers, "it has this advantage—that while it has sufficient association with honourable distinction to affect the mind of the namesake and rouse his emulation, it is not that of so stupendous a personage as to defy rivalry. Sir Kenelm Digby was certainly an accomplished and gallant gentleman; but what with his silly superstition about sympathetic powders, &c., any man nowadays might be clever in comparison without being a prodigy. Yes, let us decide on Kenelm."

Sir Peter meditated. "Certainly," said he, after a pause—"certainly the name of Kenelm carries with it very crotchety associations; and I am afraid that Sir Kenelm Digby did not make a prudent choice in marriage. The fair Venetia was no better than she should be: and I should wish my heir not to be led away by beauty but wed a woman of respectable character and decorous conduct."

MISS MARGARET.—"A British matron, of course!"

THREE SISTERS (in chorus).—"Of course—of course!"

"But," resumed Sir Peter, "I am crotchety myself, and crotchets are innocent things enough; and as for marriage the Baby cannot marry to-morrow, so that we have ample time to consider that matter. Kenelm Digby was a man any family might be proud of; and, as you say, sister Margaret, Kenelm Chillingly does not sound amiss—Kenelm Chillingly it shall be!"

The Baby was accordingly christened Kenelm, after which ceremony its face grew longer than before.

CHAPTER V.

BEFORE his relations dispersed, Sir Peter summoned Mr. Gordon into his library.

"Cousin," said he, kindly, "I do not blame you for the want of family affection, or even of humane interest, which you exhibit towards the New-born."

"Blame me, Cousin Peter! I should think not. I exhibit as much family affection and humane interest as could be expected from me—circumstances considered."

"I own," said Sir Peter, with all his wonted mildness, "that after remaining childless for fourteen years of wedded life, the advent of this little stranger must have occasioned you a disagreeable surprise. But, after all, as I am many years younger than you, and in the course of nature shall outlive you, the loss is less to yourself than to your son, and upon that I wish to say a few words. You know too well the conditions on which I hold my estate not to be aware that I have not legally the power to saddle it with any bequest to your boy. The New-born succeeds to the fee-simple as last in tail. But I intend, from this moment, to lay by something every year for your son out of my income; and, fond as I am of London for a part of the year, I shall now give up my town-house. If I live to the years the Psalmist allots to man, I shall thus accumulate something handsome for your son, which may be taken in the way of compensation."

Mr. Gordon was by no means softened by this generous speech. However, he answered more politely than was his wont, "My son will be very much obliged to you, should he ever need your intended bequest." Pausing a moment, he added with a cheerful smile, "A large percentage of infants die before attaining the age of twenty-one."

"Nay, but I am told your son is an uncommonly fine healthy child."

"My son, Cousin Peter! I was not thinking of my son, but of yours. Yours has a big head. I should not wonder if he had water in it. I don't wish to alarm you, but he may go off any day, and in that case it is not likely that Lady Chillingly will condescend to replace him. So you will excuse me if I still keep a watchful eye on my rights, and however painful to my feelings, I must still dispute your right to cut a stick of the field timber."

"That is nonsense, Gordon. I am tenant for life without impeachment of waste, and can cut down all timber not ornamental."

"I advise you not, Cousin Peter. I have told you before that I shall try the question at law, should you provoke it—amicably, of course. Rights are rights; and if I am driven to maintain mine, I trust that you are of a mind too liberal to allow your family affection for me and mine to be influenced by a decree of the Court of Chancery. But my fly is waiting. I must not miss the train."

"Well, good-bye, Gordon. Shake hands."

"Shake hands!—of course—of course. By the by, as I came through the lodge, it seemed to me sadly out of repair. I believe you are liable for dilapidations. Good-bye."

"The man is a hog in armour," soliloquised Sir Peter, when his cousin was gone; "and if it be hard to drive a common pig in the way he don't choose to go, a hog in armour is indeed undrivable. But his boy ought not to suffer for his father's hoggishness; and I shall begin at once to see what I can lay by for him. After all, it *is* hard upon Gordon. Poor Gordon;—poor fellow—poor fellow! Still I hope he will not go to law with me. I hate law. And a worm will turn—especially a worm that is put into Chancery."

CHAPTER VI.

DESPITE the sinister semi-predictions of the *ci-devant* heir-at-law, the youthful Chillingly passed with safety, and indeed with dignity, through the infant stages of existence. He took his measles and whooping-cough with philosophical equanimity. He gradually acquired the use of speech, but he did not too lavishly exercise that special attribute of humanity. During the earlier years of childhood he spoke as little as if he had been prematurely trained in the school of Pythagoras. But he evidently spoke the less in order to reflect the more. He observed closely and pondered deeply over what he observed. At the age of eight he began to converse more freely, and it was in that year that he startled his mother with the question

—"Mamma, are you not sometimes overpowered by the sense of your own identity?"

Lady Chillingly—I was about to say rushed, but Lady Chillingly never rushed—Lady Chillingly glided less sedately than her wont to Sir Peter, and repeating her son's question, said, "The boy is growing troublesome, too wise for any woman; he must go to school."

Sir Peter was of the same opinion. But where on earth did the child get hold of so long a word as "identity," and how did so extraordinary and puzzling a metaphysical question come into his head? Sir Peter summoned Kenelm, and ascertained that the boy, having free access to the library, had fastened upon Locke on the Human Understanding, and was prepared to dispute with that philosopher upon the doctrine of innate ideas. Quoth Kenelm, gravely—"A want is an idea; and if, as soon as I was born, I felt the want of food and knew at once where to turn for it, without being taught, surely I came into the world with an 'innate idea.'"

Sir Peter, though he dabbled in metaphysics, was posed, and scratched his head without getting out a proper answer as to the distinction between ideas and instincts. "My child," he said at last, "you don't know what you are talking about; go and take a good gallop on your black pony; and I forbid you to read any books that are not given to you by myself or your mamma. Stick to *Puss in Boots*."

CHAPTER VII.

SIR PETER ordered his carriage and drove to the house of the stout parson. That doughty ecclesiastic held a family living a few miles distant from the Hall, and was the only one of the cousins with whom Sir Peter habitually communed on his domestic affairs.

He found the Parson in his study, which exhibited tastes other than clerical. Over the chimney-piece were ranged

fencing-foils boxing-gloves, and staffs for the athletic exercise of single-stick; cricket-bats and fishing-rods filled up the angles. There were sundry prints on the walls: one of Mr. Wordsworth, flanked by two of distinguished race-horses; one of a Leicestershire short-horn, with which the Parson, who farmed his own glebe and bred cattle in its rich pastures, had won a prize at the county show; and on either side of that animal were the portraits of Hooker and Jeremy Taylor. There were dwarf bookcases containing miscellaneous works very handsomely bound. At the open window, a stand of flower-pots, the flowers in full bloom. The Parson's flowers were famous.

The appearance of the whole room was that of a man who is tidy and neat in his habits.

"Cousin," said Sir Peter, "I have come to consult you." And therewith he related the marvellous precocity of Kenelm Chillingly. "You see the name begins to work on him rather too much. He must go to school; and now what school shall it be? Private or public?"

THE REV. JOHN STALWORTH.—"There is a great deal to be said for or against either. At a public school the chances are that Kenelm will no longer be overpowered by a sense of his own identity; he will more probably lose identity altogether. The worst of a public school is that a sort of common character is substituted for individual character. The master, of course, can't attend to the separate development of each boy's idiosyncrasy. All minds are thrown into one great mould, and come out of it more or less in the same form. An Etonian may be clever or stupid, but, as either, he remains emphatically Etonian. A public school ripens talent, but its tendency is to stifle genius. Then, too, a public school for an only son, heir to a good estate, which will be entirely at his own disposal, is apt to encourage reckless and extravagant habits; and your estate requires careful management, and leaves no margin for an heir's notes-of-hand and post-obits. On the whole, I am against a public school for Kenelm."

"Well then, we will decide on a private one."

"Hold!" said the Parson: "a private school has its draw-

backs. You can seldom produce large fishes in small ponds. In private schools the competition is narrowed, the energies stunted. The schoolmaster's wife interferes, and generally coddles the boys. There is not manliness enough in those academies; no fagging, and very little fighting. A clever boy turns out a prig; a boy of feeblor intellect turns out a well-behaved young lady in trousers. Nothing muscular in the system. Decidedly the namesake and descendant of Kenelm Digby should not go to a private seminary."

"So far as I gather from your reasoning," said Sir Peter, with characteristic placidity, "Kenelm Chillingly is not to go to school at all."

"It does look like it," said the Parson, candidly; "but, on consideration, there is a medium. There are schools which unite the best qualities of public and private schools, large enough to stimulate and develop energies mental and physical, yet not so framed as to melt all character in one crucible. For instance, there is a school which has at this moment one of the first scholars in Europe for head-master—a school which has turned out some of the most remarkable men of the rising generation. The master sees at a glance if a boy be clever, and takes pains with him accordingly. He is not a mere teacher of hexameters and sapphics. His learning embraces all literature, ancient and modern. He is a good writer and a fine critic—admires Wordsworth. He winks at fighting, his boys know how to use their fists, and they are not in the habit of signing post-obits before they are fifteen. Merton School is the place for Kenelm."

"Thank you," said Sir Peter. "It is a great comfort in life to find somebody who can decide for one. I am an irresolute man myself, and in ordinary matters willingly let Lady Chillingly govern me."

"I should like to see a wife govern *me*," said the stout Parson.

"But you are not married to Lady Chillingly. And now let us go into the garden and look at your dahlias."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE youthful confuter of Locke was despatched to Merton School, and ranked, according to his merits, as lag of the penultimate form. When he came home for the Christmas holidays he was more saturnine than ever—in fact, his countenance bore the impression of some absorbing grief. He said, however, that he liked school very well, and eluded all other questions. But early the next morning he mounted his black pony and rode to the Parson's rectory. The reverend gentleman was in his farm-yard examining his bullocks when Kenelm accosted him thus briefly :—

"Sir, I am disgraced, and I shall die of it if you cannot help to set me right in my own eyes."

"My dear boy, don't talk in that way. Come into my study."

As soon as they entered that room, and the Parson had carefully closed the door, he took the boy's arm, turned him round to the light, and saw at once that there was something very grave on his mind. Chucking him under the chin, the Parson said cheerily, "Hold up your head, Kenelm. I am sure you have done nothing unworthy of a gentleman."

"I don't know that. I fought a boy very little bigger than myself, and I have been licked. I did not give in, though; but the other boys picked me up, for I could not stand any longer—and the fellow is a great bully—and his name is Butt—and he's the son of a lawyer—and he got my head into chancery—and I have challenged him to fight again next half—and unless you can help me to lick him, I shall never be good for anything in the world—never. It will break my heart."

"I am very glad to hear you have had the pluck to challenge him. Just let me see how you double your fist. Well, that's not amiss. Now, put yourself into a fighting attitude, and hit out at me—hard—harder! Pooh! that will never do. You should make your blows as straight as an arrow. And that's not the way to stand. Stop—so; well on your haunches—

weight on the left leg—good! Now, put on these gloves, and I'll give you a lesson in boxing."

Five minutes afterwards Mrs. John Chillingly, entering the room to summon her husband to breakfast, stood astounded to see him with his coat off, and parrying the blows of Kenelm, who flew at him like a young tiger. The good pastor at that moment might certainly have appeared a fine type of muscular Christianity, but not of that kind of Christianity out of which one makes Archbishops of Canterbury.

"Good gracious me!" faltered Mrs. John Chillingly; and then, wife-like, flying to the protection of her husband, she seized Kenelm by the shoulders, and gave him a good shaking. The Parson, who was sadly out of breath, was not displeased at the interruption, but took that opportunity to put on his coat, and said, "We'll begin again to-morrow. Now, come to breakfast." But during breakfast Kenelm's face still betrayed dejection, and he talked little, and ate less.

As soon as the meal was over, he drew the Parson into the garden and said, "I have been thinking, sir, that perhaps it is not fair to Butt, that I should be taking these lessons; and if it is not fair, I'd rather not——"

"Give me your hand, my boy!" cried the Parson, transported. "The name of Kenelm is not thrown away upon you. The natural desire of man in his attribute of fighting animal (an attribute in which, I believe, he excels all other animated beings, except a quail and a gamecock), is to beat his adversary. But the natural desire of that culmination of man which we call gentleman, is to beat his adversary fairly. A gentleman would rather be beaten fairly than beat unfairly. Is not that your thought?"

"Yes," replied Kenelm, firmly; and then, beginning to philosophise, he added,—"And it stands to reason; because if I beat a fellow unfairly, I don't really beat him at all."

"Excellent! But suppose that you and another boy go into examination upon Cæsar's *Commentaries* or the multiplication table, and the other boy is cleverer than you, but you have taken the trouble to learn the subject and he has not; should you say you beat him unfairly?"

Kenelm meditated a moment, and then said decidedly, "No."

"That which applies to the use of your brains applies equally to the use of your fists. Do you comprehend me?"

"Yes, sir ; I do now."

"In the time of your namesake, Sir Kenelm Digby, gentlemen wore swords, and they learned how to use them, because, in case of quarrel, they had to fight with them. Nobody, at least in England, fights with swords now. It is a democratic age, and if you fight at all, you are reduced to fists; and if Kenelm Digby learned to fence, so Kenelm Chillingly must learn to box; and if a gentleman thrashes a drayman twice his size, who has not learned to box, it is not unfair; it is but an exemplification of the truth, that knowledge is power. Come and take another lesson on boxing to-morrow."

Kenelm remounted his pony and returned home. He found his father sauntering in the garden with a book in his hand. "Papa," said Kenelm, "how does one gentleman write to another with whom he has a quarrel, and he don't want to make it up, but he has something to say about the quarrel which it is fair the other gentleman should know?"

"I don't understand what you mean."

"Well, just before I went to school I remember hearing you say that you had a quarrel with Lord Hautfort, and that he was an ass, and you would write and tell him so. When you wrote did you say, 'You are an ass'? Is that the way one gentleman writes to another?"

"Upon my honour, Kenelm, you ask very odd questions. But you cannot learn too early this fact, that irony is to the high-bred what Billingsgate is to the vulgar; and when one gentleman thinks another gentleman an ass, he does not say it point-blank—he implies it in the politest terms he can invent. Lord Hautfort denies my right of free warren over a trout-stream that runs through his lands. I don't care a rush about the trout-stream, but there is no doubt of my right to fish in it. He was an ass to raise the question; for, if he had not, I should not have exercised the right. As he did raise the question, I was obliged to catch his trout."

"And you wrote a letter to him?"

"Yes."

"How did you write, papa? What did you say?"

"Something like this. 'Sir Peter Chillingly presents his compliments to Lord Hautfort, and thinks it fair to his lordship to say that he has taken the best legal advice with regard to his rights of free warren; and trusts to be forgiven if he presumes to suggest that Lord Hautfort might do well to consult his own lawyer before he decides on disputing them.'"

"Thank you, papa. I see."

That evening Kenelm wrote the following letter:—

"Mr. Chillingly presents his compliments to Mr. Butt, and thinks it fair to Mr. Butt to say, that he is taking lessons in boxing; and trusts to be forgiven if he presumes to suggest that Mr. Butt might do well to take lessons himself before fighting with Mr. Chillingly next half."

"Papa," said Kenelm the next morning, "I want to write to a schoolfellow whose name is Butt; he is the son of a lawyer who is called a serjeant. I don't know where to direct to him."

"That is easily ascertained," said Sir Peter. "Serjeant Butt is an eminent man, and his address will be in the Court Guide."

The address was found—Bloomsbury Square, and Kenelm directed his letter accordingly. In due course he received this answer:—

'You are an insolent little fool, and I'll thrash you within an inch of your life.

ROBERT BUTT."

After the receipt of that polite epistle, Kenelm Chillingly's scruples vanished, and he took daily lessons in muscular Christianity.

Kenelm returned to school with a brow cleared from care, and three days after his return he wrote to the Rev. John:—

"DEAR SIR,—I have licked Butt. Knowledge is power.--
Your affectionate

KENELM.

"P.S.—Now that I have licked Butt, I have made it up with him."

From that time Kenelm prospered. Eulogistic letters from the illustrious head-master showered in upon Sir Peter. At the age of sixteen Kenelm Chillingly was the head of the school, and quitting it finally, brought home the following letter from his Orbilius to Sir Peter, marked 'confidential':—

"DEAR SIR PETER CHILLINGLY,—I have never felt more anxious for the future career of any of my pupils than I do for that of your son. He is so clever that, with ease to himself, he may become a great man. He is so peculiar, that it is quite as likely that he may only make himself known to the world as a great oddity. That distinguished teacher, Dr. Arnold, said that the difference between one boy and another was not so much talent as energy. Your son has talent, has energy—yet he wants something for success in life; he wants the faculty of amalgamation. He is of a melancholic and therefore unsocial temperament. He will not act in concert with others. He is lovable enough; the other boys like him, especially the smaller ones, with whom he is a sort of hero; but he has not one intimate friend. So far as school learning is concerned, he might go to college at once, and with the certainty of distinction, provided he chose to exert himself. But if I may venture to offer an advice, I should say employ the next two years in letting him see a little more of real life, and acquire a due sense of its practical objects. Send him to a private tutor who is not a pedant, but a man of letters or a man of the world, and if in the metropolis so much the better. In a word, my young friend is unlike other people; and, with qualities that might do anything in life, I fear, unless you can get him to be like other people, that he will do nothing. Excuse the freedom with which I write, and ascribe it to the singular interest with which your son has inspired me.—I have the honour to be, dear Sir Peter, yours truly,

"WILLIAM HORTON."

Upon the strength of this letter Sir Peter did not indeed summon another family council; for he did not consider that his three maiden sisters could offer any practical advice on the

matter. And as to Mr. Gordon, that gentleman having gone to law on the great timber question, and having been signally beaten thereon, had informed Sir Peter that he disowned him as a cousin and despised him as a man—not exactly in those words—more covertly, and therefore more stingingly. But Sir Peter invited Mr. Mivers for a week's shooting, and requested the Rev. John to meet him.

Mr. Mivers arrived. The sixteen years that had elapsed since he was first introduced to the reader, had made no perceptible change in his appearance. It was one of his maxims that in youth a man of the world should appear older than he is; and in middle age, and thence to his dying day, younger. And he announced one secret for attaining that art in these words: "Begin your wig early, thus you never become grey."

Unlike most philosophers, Mivers made his practice conform to his precepts; and while in the prime of youth inaugurated a wig in a fashion that defied the flight of time, not curly and hyacinthine, but straight-haired and unassuming. He looked five-and-thirty from the day he put on that wig at the age of twenty-five. He looked five-and-thirty now at the age of fifty-one.

"I mean," said he "to remain thirty-five all my life. No better age to stick at. People may choose to say I am more, but I shall not own it. No one is bound to criminate himself."

Mr. Mivers had some other aphorisms on this important subject. One was, "Refuse to be ill. Never tell people you are ill; never own it to yourself. Illness is one of those things which a man should resist on principle at the onset. It should never be allowed to get in the thin end of the wedge. But take care of your constitution, and, having ascertained the best habits for it, keep to them like clockwork." Mr. Mivers would not have missed his constitutional walk in the Park before breakfast if, by going in a cab to St. Giles's, he could have saved the city of London from conflagration.

Another aphorism of his was, "If you want to keep young, live in a metropolis; never stay above a few weeks at a time in the country. Take two men of similar constitution at the

age of twenty-five; let one live in London and enjoy a regular sort of club life; send the other to some rural district, preposterously called 'salubrious.' Look at these men when they have both reached the age of forty-five. The London man has preserved his figure, the rural man has a paunch. The London man has an interesting delicacy of complexion; the face of the rural man is coarse-grained and perhaps jowly."

A third axiom was, "Don't be a family man; nothing ages one like matrimonial felicity and paternal ties. Never multiply cares, and pack up your life in the briefest compass you can. Why add to your carpet-bag of troubles the contents of a lady's imperials and bonnet-boxes, and the travelling *fourgon* required by the nursery? Shun ambition—it is so gouty. It takes a great deal out of a man's life, and gives him nothing worth having till he has ceased to enjoy it." Another of his aphorisms was this, "A fresh mind keeps the body fresh. Take in the ideas of the day, drain off those of yesterday. As to the morrow, time enough to consider it when it becomes to-day."

Preserving himself by attention to these rules, Mr. Mivers appeared at Exmundham *totus, teres*, but not *rotundus*—a man of middle height, slender, upright, with well-cut, small, slight features, thin lips, inclosing an excellent set of teeth, even, white, and not indebted to the dentist. For the sake of those teeth he shunned acid wines, especially hock in all its varieties, culinary sweets, and hot drinks. He drank even his tea cold. "There are," he said, "two things in life that a sage must preserve at every sacrifice, the coats of his stomach and the enamel of his teeth. Some evils admit of consolations: there are no comforters for dyspepsia and toothache." A man of letters, but a man of the world, he had so cultivated his mind as both, that he was feared as the one, and liked as the other. As a man of letters he despised the world; as a man of the world he despised letters. As the representative of both he revered himself.

CHAPTER IX.

ON the evening of the third day from the arrival of Mr. Mivers, he, the Parson, and Sir Peter were seated in the host's parlour, the Parson in an arm-chair by the ingle, smoking a short cutty-pipe ; Mivers at length on the couch slowly inhaling the perfumes of one of his own choice *trabucos*. Sir Peter never smoked. There were spirits and hot water and lemons on the table. The parson was famed for skill in the composition of toddy. From time to time the Parson sipped his glass, and Sir Peter, less frequently, did the same. It is needless to say that Mr. Mivers eschewed toddy : but beside him, on a chair was a tumbler and a large carafe of iced water.

SIR PETER.—“Cousin Mivers, you have now had time to study Kenelm, and to compare his character with that assigned to him in the Doctor's letter.”

MIVERS (languidly).—“Ay.”

SIR PETER.—“I ask you, as a man of the world, what you think I had best do with the boy. Shall I send him to such a tutor as the Doctor suggests? Cousin John is not of the same mind as the Doctor, and thinks that Kenelm's oddities are fine things in their way, and should not be prematurely ground out of him by contact with worldly tutors and London pavements.”

“Ay,” repeated Mr. Mivers more languidly than before. After a pause he added, “Parson John, let us hear you.”

The Parson laid aside his cutty-pipe and emptied his fourth tumbler of toddy, then, throwing back his head in the dreamy fashion of the great Coleridge when he indulged in a monologue, he thus began, speaking somewhat through his nose—

“At the morning of life——”

Here Mivers shrugged his shoulders, turned round on his couch, and closed his eyes with the sigh of a man resigning himself to a homily.

“At the morning of life, when the dews——”

“I knew the dews were coming,” said Mivers. “Dry them, if you please ; nothing so unwholesome. We anticipate what you

mean to say, which is plainly this—When a fellow is sixteen he is very fresh ; so he is—pass on—what then ?”

“If you mean to interrupt me with your habitual cynicism,” said the Parson, “why did you ask to hear me ?”

“That was a mistake I grant ; but who on earth could conceive that you were going to commence in that florid style ? Morning of life indeed !—bosh !”

“Cousin Mivers,” said Sir Peter, “you are not reviewing John’s style in *The Londoner* ; and I will beg you to remember that my son’s morning of life is a serious thing to his father, and not to be nipped in its bud by a cousin. Proceed, John !”

Quoth the Parson, good-humouredly, “I will adapt my style to the taste of my critic. When a fellow is at the age of sixteen, and very fresh to life, the question is whether he should begin thus prematurely to exchange the ideas that belong to youth for the ideas that properly belong to middle age,—whether he should begin to acquire that knowledge of the world which middle-aged men have acquired and can teach. I think not. I would rather have him yet a while in the company of the poets—in the indulgence of glorious hopes and beautiful dreams, forming to himself some type of the Heroic, which he will keep before his eyes as a standard when he goes into the world as man. There are two schools of thought for the formation of character—the Real and Ideal. I would form the character in the Ideal school, in order to make it bolder and grander and lovelier when it takes its place in that everyday life which is called Real. And therefore I am not for placing the descendant of Sir Kenelm Digby, in the interval between school and college, with a man of the world, probably as cynical as cousin Mivers, and living in the stony thoroughfares of London.”

MR. MIVERS (rousing himself).—“Before we plunge into that Serbonian bog—the controversy between the Realistic and the Idealistic academicians—I think the first thing to decide is what you want Kenelm to be hereafter. When I order a pair of shoes, I decide beforehand what kind of shoes they are to be—court pumps or strong walking shoes ; and I don’t ask the shoemaker to give me a preliminary lecture upon the dif-

ferent purposes of locomotion to which leather can be applied. If, Sir Peter, you want Kenelm to scribble lackadaisical poems, listen to Parson John; if you want to fill his head with pastoral rubbish about innocent love, which may end in marrying the Miller's daughter, listen to Parson John; if you want him to enter life a soft-headed greenhorn, who will sign any bill carrying 50 per cent: to which a young scamp asks him to be security, listen to Parson John; in fine, if you wish a clever lad to become either a pigeon or a ringdove, a credulous booby or a sentimental milksop, Parson John is the best adviser you can have."

"But I don't want my son to ripen into either of those imbecile developments of species."

"Then don't listen to Parson John; and there's an end of the discussion."

"No, there is not. I have not heard your advice what to do if John's advice is not to be taken."

Mr. Mivers hesitated. He seemed puzzled.

"The fact is," said the Parson, "that Mivers got up *The Londoner* upon a principle that regulates his own mind,—find fault with the way everything is done, but never commit yourself by saying how anything can be done better."

"That is true," said Mivers, candidly. "The destructive order of mind is seldom allied to the constructive. I and *The Londoner* are destructive by nature and by policy. We can reduce a building into rubbish, but we don't profess to turn rubbish into a building. We are critics, and, as you say, not such fools as to commit ourselves to the proposition of amendments that can be criticised by others. Nevertheless, for your sake, Cousin Peter, and on the condition that if I give my advice you will never say that I gave it, and if you take it, that you will never reproach me if it turns out, as most advice does, very ill—I will depart from my custom and hazard my opinion."

"I accept the conditions."

"Well then, with every new generation there springs up a new order of ideas. The earlier the age at which a man seizes the ideas that will influence his own generation, the more he has a start in the race with his contemporaries. If Kenelm

comprehends at sixteen those intellectual signs of the time which, when he goes up to college, he will find young men of eighteen or twenty only just *prepared* to comprehend, he will produce a deep impression of his powers for reasoning, and their adaptation to actual life, which will be of great service to him later. Now the ideas that influence the mass of the rising generation never have their well-head in the generation itself. They have their source in the generation before them, generally in a small minority, neglected or contemned by the great majority which adopt them later. Therefore a lad at the age of sixteen, if he wants to get at such ideas, must come into close contact with some superior mind in which they were conceived twenty or thirty years before. I am consequently for placing Kenelm with a person from whom the new ideas can be learned. I am also for his being placed in the metropolis during the process of this initiation. With such introductions as are at our command, he may come in contact not only with new ideas, but with eminent men in all vocations. It is a great thing to mix betimes with clever people. One picks their brains unconsciously. There is another advantage, and not a small one, in this early entrance into good society. A youth learns manners, self-possession, readiness of resource; and he is much less likely to get into scrapes and contract tastes for low vices and mean dissipation, when he comes into life wholly his own master, after having acquired a predilection for refined companionship under the guidance of those competent to select it. There, I have talked myself out of breath. And you had better decide at once in favour of my advice; for as I am of a contradictory temperament, myself of to-morrow may probably contradict myself of to-day."

Sir Peter was greatly impressed with his cousin's argumentative eloquence.

The Parson smoked his cutty-pipe in silence until appealed to by Sir Peter, and he then said, "In this programme of education for a Christian gentleman, the part of Christian seems to me left out."

"The tendency of the age," observed Mr. Mivers, calmly, "is towards that omission. Secular education is the necessary

reaction from the special theological training which arose in the dislike of one set of Christians to the teaching of another set; and as these antagonists will not agree how religion is to be taught, either there must be no teaching at all, or religion must be eliminated from the tuition."

"That may do very well for some huge system of national education," said Sir Peter, "but it does not apply to Kenelm, as one of a family all of whose members belong to the Established Church. He may be taught the creed of his forefather: without offending a Dissenter."

"Which Established Church is he to belong to?" asked Mr. Mivers—"High Church, Low Church, Broad Church, Puseyite Church, Ritualistic Church, or any other Established Church that may be coming into fashion?"

"Pshaw!" said the Parson. "That sneer is out of place. You know very well that one merit of our Church is the spirit of toleration, which does not magnify every variety of opinion into a heresy or a schism. But if Sir Peter sends his son at the age of sixteen to a tutor who eliminates the religion of Christianity from his teaching, he deserves to be thrashed within an inch of his life; and," continued the Parson eyeing Sir Peter sternly, and mechanically turning up his cuffs, "I should *like* to thrash him."

"Gently, John," said Sir Peter, recoiling; "gently, my dear kinsman. My heir shall not be educated as a heathen, and Mivers is only bantering us. Come, Mivers, do you happen to know among your London friends some man who, though a scholar and a man of the world, is still a Christian?"

"A Christian as by law established?"

"Well—yes."

"And who will receive Kenelm as a pupil?"

"Of course I am not putting such questions to you out of idle curiosity."

"I know *exactly* the man. He was originally intended for orders, and is a very learned theologian. He relinquished the thought of the clerical profession on succeeding to a small landed estate by the sudden death of an elder brother. He then came to London and bought experience—that is, he was

naturally generous—he became easily taken in—got into difficulties—the estate was transferred to trustees for the benefit of creditors, and on the payment of 400*l.* a-year to himself. By this time he was married and had two children. He found the necessity of employing his pen in order to add to his income, and is one of the ablest contributors to the periodical press. He is an elegant scholar, an effective writer, much courted by public men, a thorough gentleman, has a pleasant house, and receives the best society. Having been once taken in, he defies any one to take him in again. His experience was not bought too dearly. No more acute and accomplished man of the world. The three hundred a-year or so that you would pay for Kenelm would suit him very well. His name is Welby, and he lives in Chester Square.”

“No doubt he is a contributor to *The Londoner*,” said the Parson, sarcastically.

“True. He writes our classical, theological, and metaphysical articles. Suppose I invite him to come here for a day or two, and you can see him and judge for yourself, Sir Peter?”

“Do.”

CHAPTER X.

MR. WELBY arrived, and pleased everybody. A man of the happiest manners, easy and courteous. There was no pedantry in him, yet you could soon see that his reading covered an extensive surface, and here and there had dived deeply. He enchanted the Parson by his comments on St. Chrysostom; he dazzled Sir Peter with his lore in the antiquities of ancient Britain; he captivated Kenelm by his readiness to enter into that most disputatious of sciences called metaphysics; while for Lady Chillingly, and the three sisters who were invited to meet him, he was more entertaining, but not less instructive. Equally at home in novels and in good books, he gave to the spinsters a list of innocent works in either; while for Lady Chillingly he sparkled with anecdotes of fashionable life, the newest *bons mots*,

the latest scandals. In fact, Mr. Welby was one of those brilliant persons who adorn any society amidst which they are thrown. If at heart he was a disappointed man, the disappointment was concealed by an even serenity of spirits; he had entertained high and justifiable hopes of a brilliant career and a lasting reputation as a theologian and a preacher; the succession to his estate at the age of twenty-three had changed the nature of his ambition. The charm of his manner was such that he sprang at once into the fashion, and became beguiled by his own genial temperament into that lesser but pleasanter kind of ambition which contents itself with social successes, and enjoys the present hour. When his circumstances compelled him to eke out his income by literary profits, he slid into the grooves of periodical composition, and resigned all thoughts of the labour required for any complete work, which might take much time and be attended with scanty profits. He still remained very popular in society, and perhaps his general reputation for ability made him fearful to hazard it by any great undertaking. He was not, like Mivers, a despiser of all men and all things; but he regarded men and things as an indifferent though good-natured spectator regards the thronging streets from a drawing-room window. He could not be called *blasé*, but he was thoroughly *désillusionné*. Once over-romantic, his character now was so entirely imbued with the neutral tints of life that romance offended his taste as an obtrusion of violent colour into a sober woof. He was become a thorough Realist in his code of criticism, and in his worldly mode of action and thought. But Parson John did not perceive this, for Welby listened to that gentleman's eulogies on the Ideal school without troubling himself to contradict them. He had grown too indolent to be combative in conversation, and only as a critic betrayed such pugnacity as remained to him by the polished cruelty of sarcasm.

He came off with flying colours through an examination into his Church orthodoxy instituted by the Parson and Sir Peter. Amid a cloud of ecclesiastical erudition, his own opinions vanished in those of the Fathers. In truth, he was a Realist in religion as in everything else. He regarded Christianity as a type of existent civilisation, which ought to be revered, as one

might recognise the other types of that civilisation—such as the liberty of the press, the representative system, white neckcloths and black coats of an evening, &c. He belonged, therefore, to what he himself called the school of Eclectical Christiology; and accommodated the reasonings of Deism to the doctrines of the Church, if not as a creed, at least as an institution. Finally, he united all the Chillingly votes in his favour; and when he departed from the Hall, carried off Kenelm for his initiation into the new ideas that were to govern his generation.

CHAPTER XL

KENELM remained a year and a half with this distinguished preceptor. During that time he learned much in book-lore; he saw much, too, of the eminent men of the day, in literature, the law, and the senate. He saw, also, a good deal of the fashionable world. Fine ladies, who had been friends of his mother in her youth, took him up, counselled and petted him. One in especial, the Marchioness of Glenalvon, to whom he was endeared by grateful association. For her youngest son had been a fellow-pupil of Kenelm's at Merton School, and Kenelm had saved his life from drowning. The poor boy died of consumption later, and her grief for his loss made her affection for Kenelm yet more tender. Lady Glenalvon was one of the queens of the London world. Though in her fiftieth year, she was still very handsome: she was also very accomplished, very clever, and very kind-hearted, as some of such queens are; just one of those women invaluable in forming the manners and elevating the character of young men destined to make a figure in after-life. But she was very angry with herself in thinking that she failed to arouse any such ambition in the heir of the Chillinglys.

It may here be said that Kenelm was not without great advantages of form and countenance. He was tall, and the youthful grace of his proportions concealed his physical strength,

which was extraordinary rather from the iron texture than the bulk of his thews and sinews. His face, though it certainly lacked the roundness of youth, had a grave, sombre, haunting sort of beauty, not artistically regular, but picturesque, peculiar, with large dark expressive eyes, and a certain indescribable combination of sweetness and melancholy in his quiet smile. He never laughed audibly, but he had a quick sense of the comic, and his eye would laugh when his lips were silent. He would say queer, droll, unexpected things which passed for humour; but, save for that gleam in the eye, he could not have said them with more seeming innocence of intentional joke if he had been a monk of La Trappe looking up from the grave he was digging in order to utter "memento mori."

That face of his was a great "take in." Women thought it full of romantic sentiment—the face of one easily moved to love, and whose love would be replete alike with poetry and passion. But he remained as proof as the youthful Hippolytus to all female attraction. He delighted the Parson by keeping up his practice in athletic pursuits; and obtained a reputation at the pugilistic school, which he attended regularly, as the best gentleman boxer about town.

He made many acquaintances, but still formed no friendships. Yet every one who saw him much conceived affection for him. If he did not return that affection, he did not repel it. He was exceedingly gentle in voice and manner, and had all his father's placidity of temper—children and dogs took to him as by instinct.

On leaving Mr. Welby's, Kenelm carried to Cambridge a mind largely stocked with the new ideas that were budding into leaf. He certainly astonished the other freshmen, and occasionally puzzled the mighty Fellows of Trinity and St. John's. But he gradually withdrew himself much from general society. In fact, he was too old in mind for his years; and after having mixed in the choicest circles of a metropolis, college suppers and wine parties had little charm for him. He maintained his pugilistic renown; and on certain occasions, when some delicate undergraduate had been bullied by some gigantic bargeman, his muscular Christianity nobly developed

itself. He did not do as much as he might have done in the more intellectual ways of academical distinction. Still, he was always among the first in the college examinations; he won two university prizes, and took a very creditable degree, after which he returned home, more odd, more saturnine—in short, less like other people—than when he had left Merton School. He had woven a solitude round him out of his own heart, and in that solitude he sat still and watchful as a spider sits in his web.

Whether from natural temperament, or from his educational training under such teachers as Mr. Mivers, who carried out the new ideas of reform by revering nothing in the past, and Mr. Welby, who accepted the routine of the present as realistic, and pooh-poohed all visions of the future as idealistic, Kenelm's chief mental characteristic was a kind of tranquil indifferentism. It was difficult to detect in him either of those ordinary incentives to action—vanity or ambition, the yearning for applause or the desire of power. To all female fascinations he had been hitherto star-proof. He had never experienced love, but he had read a good deal about it, and that passion seemed to him an unaccountable aberration of human reason, and an ignominious surrender of the equanimity of thought which it should be the object of masculine natures to maintain undisturbed. A very eloquent book in praise of celibacy, and entitled *The Approach to the Angels*, written by that eminent Oxford scholar, Decimus Roach, had produced so remarkable an effect upon his youthful mind, that, had he been a Roman Catholic, he might have become a monk. Where he most evinced ardour, it was a logician's ardour for abstract truth—that is, for what *he* considered truth; and as what seems truth to one man is sure to seem falsehood to some other man, this predilection of his was not without its inconveniences and dangers, as may probably be seen in the following chapter.

Meanwhile, rightly to appreciate his conduct therein, I intreat thee, O candid reader (not that any reader ever is candid), to remember that he is brimful of new ideas, which, met by a deep and hostile undercurrent of old ideas, become more provocatively billowy and surging.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE had been great festivities at Exmundham, in celebration of the honour bestowed upon the world by the fact that Kenelm Chillingly had lived twenty-one years in it.

The young heir had made a speech to the assembled tenants and other admitted revellers, which had by no means added to the exhilaration of the proceedings. He spoke with a fluency and self-possession which were surprising in a youth addressing a multitude for the first time. But his speech was not cheerful.

The principal tenant on the estate, in proposing his health, had naturally referred to the long line of his ancestors. His father's merits as man and landlord had been enthusiastically commemorated, and many happy auguries for his own future career had been drawn, partly from the excellences of his parentage, partly from his own youthful promise in the honours achieved at the university.

Kenelm Chillingly in reply, largely availed himself of those new ideas which were to influence the rising generation, and with which he had been rendered familiar by the journal of Mr. Mivers and the conversation of Mr. Welby.

He briefly disposed of the ancestral part of the question. He observed that it was singular to note how long any given family or dynasty could continue to flourish in any given nook of matter in creation, without any exhibition of intellectual powers beyond those displayed by a succession of vegetable crops. "It is certainly true," he said, "that the Chillinglys have lived in this place from father to son for about a fourth part of the history of the world, since the date which Sir Isaac Newton assigns to the Deluge. But, so far as can be judged by existent records, the world has not been in any way wiser or better for their existence. They were born to eat as long as they could eat, and when they could eat no longer they died. Not that in this respect they were a whit less insignificant than the generality of their fellow-creatures. Most of us now present," continued the youthful orator, "are only born in order to die ;

and the chief consolation of our wounded pride in admitting this fact is in the probability that our posterity will not be of more consequence to the scheme of nature than we ourselves are." Passing from that philosophical view of his own ancestors in particular, and of the human race in general, Kenelm Chillingly then touched with serene analysis on the eulogies lavished on his father as man and landlord.

"As man," he said, "my father no doubt deserves all that can be said by man in favour of man. But what, at the best, is man? A crude, struggling, undeveloped embryo, of whom it is the highest attribute that he feels a vague consciousness that he is only an embryo, and cannot complete himself till he ceases to be a man; that is, until he becomes another being in another form of existence. We can praise a dog as a dog, because a dog is a completed *ens*, and not an embryo. But to praise a man as man, forgetting that he is only a germ out of which a form wholly different is ultimately to spring, is equally opposed to Scriptural belief in his present crudity and imperfection, and to psychological or metaphysical examination of a mental construction evidently designed for purposes that he can never fulfil as man. That my father is an embryo not more incomplete than any present, is quite true; but that, you will see on reflection, is saying very little on his behalf. Even in the boasted physical formation of us men, you are aware that the best-shaped amongst us, according to the last scientific discoveries, is only a development of some hideous hairy animal, such as a gorilla; and the ancestral gorilla itself had its own aboriginal forefather in a small marine animal shaped like a two-necked bottle. The probability is that, some day or other, we shall be exterminated by a new development of species.

"As for the merits assigned to my father as landlord, I must respectfully dissent from the panegyrics so rashly bestowed on him. For all sound reasoners must concur in this, that the first duty of an owner of land is not to the occupiers to whom he leases it, but to the nation at large. It is his duty to see that the land yields to the community the utmost it can yield. In order to effect this object, a landlord should put up his farms to competition, exacting the highest rent he can possibly get from

responsible competitors. Competitive examination is the enlightened order of the day, even in professions in which the best men would have qualities that defy examination. In agriculture, happily, the principle of competitive examination is not so hostile to the choice of the best man as it must be, for instance, in diplomacy, where a Talleyrand would be excluded for knowing no language but his own; and still more in the army, where promotion would be denied to an officer who, like Marlborough, could not spell. But in agriculture a landlord has only to inquire who can give the highest rent, having the largest capital, subject by the strictest penalties of law to the conditions of a lease dictated by the most scientific agriculturists under penalties fixed by the most cautious conveyancers. By this mode of procedure, recommended by the most liberal economists of our age—barring those still more liberal who deny that property in land is any property at all—by this mode of procedure, I say, a landlord does his duty to his country. He secures tenants who can produce the most to the community by their capital, tested through competitive examination in their bankers' accounts and the security they can give, and through the rigidity of covenants suggested by a Liebig and reduced into law by a Chitty. But on my father's land I see a great many tenants with little skill and less capital, ignorant of a Liebig and revolting from a Chitty, and no filial enthusiasm can induce me honestly to say that my father is a good landlord. He has preferred his affection for individuals to his duties to the community. It is not, my friends, a question whether a handful of farmers like yourselves go to the workhouse or not. It is a consumer's question. Do you produce the maximum of corn to the consumer?

"With respect to myself," continued the orator, warming, as the cold he had engendered in his audience became more freezingly felt—"with respect to myself, I do not deny that, owing to the accident of training for a very faulty and contracted course of education, I have obtained what are called 'honours' at the University of Cambridge; but you must not regard that fact as a promise of any worth in my future passage through life. Some of the most useless persons—especially

narrow-minded and bigoted—have acquired far higher honours at the university than have fallen to my lot.

“I thank you no less for the civil things you have said of me and of my family ; but I shall endeavour to walk to that grave to which we are all bound with a tranquil indifference as to what people may say of me in so short a journey. And the sooner, my friends, we get to our journey’s end, the better our chance of escaping a great many pains, troubles, sins, and diseases. So that when I drink to your good healths, you must feel that in reality I wish you an early deliverance from the ills to which flesh is exposed, and which so generally increase with our years that good health is scarcely compatible with the decaying faculties of old age. Gentlemen, your good healths !”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE morning after these birthday rejoicings, Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly held a long consultation on the peculiarities of their heir, and the best mode of instilling into his mind the expediency either of entertaining more pleasing views, or at least of professing less unpopular sentiments—compatibly of course, though they did not say it, with the new ideas that were to govern his century. Having come to an agreement on this delicate subject, they went forth, arm in arm, in search of their heir. Kenelm seldom met them at breakfast. He was an early riser, and accustomed to solitary rambles before his parents were out of bed.

The worthy pair found Kenelm seated on the banks of a trout-stream that meandered through Chillingly Park, dipping his line into the water, and yawning, with apparent relief in that operation.

“Does fishing amuse you, my boy ?” said Sir Peter, heartily.

“Not in the least, sir,” answered Kenelm.

“Then why do you do it ?” asked Lady Chillingly.

“Because I know nothing else that amuses me more.”

"Ah! that is it," said Sir Peter; the whole secret of Kenelm's oddities is to be found in these words, my dear; he needs amusement. Voltaire says truly, 'Amusement is one of the wants of man.' And if Kenelm could be amused like other people, he would be like other people."

"In that case," said Kenelm, gravely, and extracting from the water a small but lively trout, which settled itself in Lady Chillingly's lap—"in that case I would rather not be amused. I have no interest in the absurdities of other people. The instinct of self-preservation compels me to have some interest in my own."

"Kenelm, sir," exclaimed Lady Chillingly, with an animation into which her tranquil ladyship was very rarely betrayed, "take away that horrid damp thing! Put down your rod and attend to what your father says. Your strange conduct gives us cause of serious anxiety."

Kenelm unhooked the trout, deposited the fish in his basket, and raising his large eyes to his father's face, said, "What is there in my conduct that occasions you displeasure?"

"Not displeasure, Kenelm," said Sir Peter, kindly, "but anxiety; your mother has hit upon the right word. You see, my dear son, that it is my wish that you should distinguish yourself in the world. You might represent this county, as your ancestors have done before. I have looked forward to the proceedings of yesterday as an admirable occasion for your introduction to your future constituents. Oratory is the talent most appreciated in a free country, and why should you not be an orator? Demosthenes says that delivery, delivery, delivery, is the art of oratory; and your delivery is excellent, graceful, self-possessed, classical."

"Pardon me, my dear father, Demosthenes does not say delivery, nor action, as the word is commonly rendered; he says, 'acting or stage-play'—*ὑπόκρισις*; the art by which a man delivers a speech in a feigned character—whence we get the word hypocrisy. Hypocrisy, hypocrisy, hypocrisy! is, according to Demosthenes, the triple art of the orator. Do you wish me to become triply a hypocrite?"

"Kenelm, I am ashamed of you. You know as well as I do

that it is only by metaphor that you can twist the word ascribed to the great Athenian into the sense of hypocrisy. But assuming it, as you say, to mean not delivery, but acting, I understand why your *début* as an orator was not successful. Your delivery was excellent, your acting defective. An orator should please, conciliate, persuade, prepossess. You did the reverse of all this; and though you produced a great effect, the effect was so decidedly to your disadvantage, that it would have lost you an election on any hustings in England."

"Am I to understand, my dear father," said Kenelm, in the mournful and compassionate tones with which a pious minister of the Church reproves some abandoned and hoary sinner—"am I to understand that you would commend to your son the adoption of deliberate falsehood for the gain of a selfish advantage?"

"Deliberate falsehood! you impertinent puppy!"

"Puppy!" repeated Kenelm, not indignantly but musingly—puppy!—a well-bred puppy takes after its parents."

Sir Peter burst out laughing.

Lady Chillingly rose with dignity, shook her gown, unfolded her parasol, and stalked away speechless.

"Now, look you, Kenelm," said Sir Peter, as soon as he had composed himself. "These quips and humours of yours are amusing enough to an eccentric man like myself, but they will not do for the world; and how at your age, and with the rare advantages you have had in an early introduction to the best intellectual society, under the guidance of a tutor acquainted with the new ideas which are to influence the conduct of statesmen, you could have made so silly a speech as you did yesterday, I cannot understand."

"My dear father, allow me to assure you that the ideas I expressed are the new ideas most in vogue—ideas expressed in still plainer, or, if you prefer the epithet, still sillier terms than I employed. You will find them instilled into the public mind by *The Londoner*, and by most intellectual journals of a liberal character."

"Kenelm, Kenelm, such ideas would turn the world topsy-turvy."

"New ideas always do tend to turn old ideas topsy-turvy. And the world, after all, is only an idea, which is turned topsy-turvy with every successive century."

"You make me sick of the word ideas. Leave off your metaphysics and study real life."

"It is real life which I did study under Mr. Welby. He is the Archimandrite of Realism. It is sham life which you wish me to study. To oblige you I am willing to commence it. I dare say it is very pleasant. Real life is not; on the contrary—dull," and Kenelm yawned again.

"Have you no young friends among your fellow-collegians?"

"Friends! certainly not, sir. But I believe I have some enemies, who answer the same purpose as friends, only they don't hurt one so much."

"Do you mean to say that you lived alone at Cambridge?"

"No, I lived a good deal with Aristophanes, and a little with Conic Sections and Hydrostatics."

"Books. Dry company."

"More innocent, at least, than moist company. Did you ever get drunk, sir?"

"Drunk!"

"I tried to do so once with the young companions whom you would commend to me as friends. I don't think I succeeded, but I woke with a headache. Real life at college abounds with headache."

"Kenelm, my boy, one thing is clear—you must travel."

"As you please, sir. Marcus Antoninus says that it is all one to a stone whether it be thrown upwards or downwards. When shall I start?"

"Very soon. Of course there are preparations to make; you should have a travelling companion. I don't mean a tutor—you are too clever and too steady to need one—but a pleasant, sensible, well-mannered young person of your own age."

"My own age—male or female?"

Sir Peter tried hard to frown. The utmost he could do was to reply gravely, "FEMALE! If I said you were too steady to need a tutor, it was because you have hitherto seemed little likely to be led out of your way by female allurements,

Among your other studies may I inquire if you have included that which no man has ever yet thoroughly mastered—the study of women?”

“Certainly. Do you object to my catching another trout?”

“Trout be——blest, or the reverse. So you have studied woman. I should never have thought it. Where and when did you commence that department of science?”

“When? ever since I was ten years old. Where? first in your own house, then at college. Hush!—a bite,” and another trout left its native element and alighted on Sir Peter’s nose, whence it was solemnly transferred to the basket.

“At ten years old, and in my own house. That flaunting hussy Jane, the under-housemaid——”

“Jane! No, sir. Pamela, Miss Byron, Clarissa—females in Richardson, who, according to Dr. Johnson, ‘taught’ the passions to move at the command of virtue.’ I trust for your sake that Dr. Johnson did not err in that assertion, for I found all these females at night in your own private apartments.”

“Oh!” said Sir Peter, “that’s all.”

“All I remember at ten years old,” replied Kenelm.

“And at Mr. Welby’s or at college,” proceeded Sir Peter, timorously, “was your acquaintance with females of the same kind?”

Kenelm shook his head. “Much worse; they were very naughty indeed at college.”

“I should think so, with such a lot of young fellows running after them.”

“Very few fellows run after the females. I mean—rather avoid them.”

“So much the better.”

“No, my father, so much the worse; without an intimate knowledge of those females there is little use going to college at all.”

“Explain yourself.”

“Every one who receives a classical education is introduced into their society—Pyrrha and Lydia, Glycera and Corinna, and many more of the same sort; and then the females in Aristophanes, what do you say to them, sir?”

"Is it only females who lived 2000 or 3000 years ago, or more probably never lived at all, whose intimacy you have cultivated? Have you never admired any real women?"

"Real women! I never met one. Never met a woman who was not a sham, a sham from the moment she is told to be pretty-behaved, conceal her sentiments, and look fibs when she does not speak them. But if I am to learn sham life, I suppose I must put up with sham women."

"Have you been crossed in love that you speak so bitterly of the sex?"

"I don't speak bitterly of the sex. Examine any woman on her oath, and she'll own she is a sham, always has been, and always will be, and is proud of it."

"I am glad your mother is not by to hear you. You will think differently one of these days. Meanwhile, to turn to the other sex, is there no young man of your own rank with whom you would like to travel?"

"Certainly not. I hate quarrelling."

"As you please. But you cannot go quite alone; I will find you a good travelling servant. I must write to town to-day about your preparations, and in another week or so I hope all will be ready. Your allowance will be whatever you like to fix it at; you have never been extravagant, and—boy—I love you. Amuse yourself, enjoy yourself, and come back cured of your oddities, but preserving your honour."

Sir Peter bent down and kissed his son's brow. Kenelm was moved; he rose, put his arm round his father's shoulder, and lovingly said, in an under tone, "If ever I am tempted to do a base thing, may I remember whose son I am—I shall be safe then." He withdrew his arm as he said this, and took his solitary way along the banks of the stream, forgetful of rod and line.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE young man continued to skirt the side of the stream, until he reached the boundary pale of the park. Here, placed on a rough grass mound, some former proprietor, of a social temperament, had built a kind of belvidere, so as to command a cheerful view of the high road below. Mechanically the heir of the Chillinglys ascended the mound, seated himself within the belvidere, and leant his chin on his hand in a thoughtful attitude. It was rarely that the building was honoured by a human visitor—its habitual occupants were spiders. Of those industrious insects it was a well-populated colony. Their webs, darkened with dust, and ornamented with the wings, and legs, and skeletons of many an unfortunate traveller, clung thick to angle and window-sill, festooned the rickety table on which the young man leant his elbow, and described geometrical circles and rhomboids between the gaping rails that formed the backs of venerable chairs. One large black spider—who was probably the oldest inhabitant, and held possession of the best place by the window, ready to offer perfidious welcome to every winged itinerant who might be tempted to turn aside from the high road for the sake of a little cool and repose—rushed from its innermost penetralia at the entrance of Kenelm, and remained motionless in the centre of its meshes, staring at him. It did not seem quite sure whether the stranger was too big or not.

“It is a wonderful proof of the wisdom of Providence,” said Kenelm, “that whenever any large number of its creatures forms a community or class, a secret element of disunion enters into the hearts of the individuals forming the congregation, and prevents their co-operating heartily and effectually for their common interest. ‘The fleas would have dragged me out of bed if they had been unanimous,’ said the great Mr. Curran: and there can be no doubt that if all the spiders in this commonwealth would unite to attack me in a body, I should fall a victim to their combined nippers. But spiders, though

inhabiting the same region, constituting the same race, animated by the same instincts, do not combine even against a butterfly ; each seeks his own special advantage, and not that of the community at large. And how completely the life of each thing resembles a circle in this respect, that it can never touch another circle at more than one point. Nay, I doubt if it quite touches it even there,—there is a space between every atom—self is always selfish ; and yet there are eminent masters in the Academe of New Ideas who wish to make us believe that all the working classes of a civilised world could merge every difference of race, creed, intellect, individual propensities and interests, into the construction of a single web, stocked as a larder in common !” Here the soliloquist came to a dead stop, and leaning out of the window, contemplated the high road. It was a very fine high road—straight and level, kept in excellent order by turnpikes at every eight miles. A pleasant greensward bordered it on either side, and under the belvidere the benevolence of some mediæval Chillingly had placed a little drinking-fountain for the refreshment of wayfarers. Close to the fountain stood a rude stone bench, overshadowed by a large willow, and commanding from the high table-ground on which it was placed a wide view of corn-fields, meadows, and distant hills, suffused in the mellow light of the summer sun. Along that road there came successively a waggon filled with passengers seated on straw—an old woman, a pretty girl, two children ; then a stout farmer going to market in his dog-cart ; then three flies carrying fares to the nearest railway station ; then a handsome young man on horseback, a handsome young lady by his side, a groom behind. It was easy to see that the young man and young lady were lovers. See it in his ardent looks and serious lips parted but for whispers only to be heard by her ;—see it in her downcast eyes and heightened colour. ““Alas ! regardless of their doom,”” muttered Kenelm, “what trouble those ‘little victims’ are preparing for themselves and their progeny ! Would I could lend them Decimus Roach’s *Approach to the Angels* !” The road now for some minutes became solitary and still, when there was heard to the right a sprightly sort of carol, half sung, half recited, in musical voice,

with a singularly clear enunciation, so that the words reached Kenelm's ear distinctly. They ran thus:—

“Black Karl looked forth from his cottage-door,
He looked on the forest green;
And down the path, with his dogs before,
Came the Ritter of Neirestein:
Singing—singing—lustily singing,
Down the path, with his dogs before,
Came the Ritter of Neirestein.”

At a voice so English, attuned to a strain so Germanic, Kenelm pricked up attentive ears, and, turning his eye down the road, beheld, emerging from the shade of beeches that overhung the park pales, a figure that did not altogether harmonise with the idea of a Ritter of Neirestein. It was, nevertheless, a picturesque figure enough. The man was attired in a somewhat threadbare suit of Lincoln green, with a high-crowned Tyrolese hat; a knapsack was slung behind his shoulders, and he was attended by a white Pomeranian dog, evidently foot-sore, but doing his best to appear proficient in the chase by limping some yards in advance of his master, and sniffing into the hedges for rats and mice, and such small deer.

By the time the pedestrian had reached to the close of his refrain he had gained the fountain, and greeted it with an exclamation of pleasure. Slipping the knapsack from his shoulder, he filled the iron ladle attached to the basin. He then called the dog by the name of Max, and held the ladle for him to drink. Not till the animal had satisfied his thirst did the master assuage his own. Then, lifting his hat and bathing his temples and face, the pedestrian seated himself on the bench, and the dog nestled on the turf at his feet. After a little pause the wayfarer began again, though in a lower and slower tone, to chant his refrain, and proceeded, with abrupt snatches, to link the verse on to another stanza. It was evident that he was either endeavouring to remember or to invent, and it seemed rather like the latter and more laborious operation of mind.

“‘Why on foot, why on foot, Ritter Karl,’ quoth he,
‘And not on thy palfrey grey?’

Palfrey grey—hum—grey.

“ ‘The run of ill-luck was too strong for me,
And has galloped my steed away.’ ”

That will do—good !”

“Good indeed ! He is easily satisfied,” muttered Kenelm. “But such pedestrians don’t pass the road every day. Let us talk to him.” So saying he slipped quietly out of the window, descended the mound, and letting himself into the road by a screened wicket-gate, took his noiseless stand behind the wayfarer and beneath the bowery willow.

The man had now sunk into silence. Perhaps he had tired himself of rhymes ; or perhaps the mechanism of verse-making had been replaced by that kind of sentiment, or that kind of reverie, which is common to the temperaments of those who indulge in verse-making. But the loveliness of the scene before him had caught his eye, and fixed it into an intent gaze upon wooded landscapes stretching farther and farther to the range of hills on which the heaven seemed to rest.

“I should like to hear the rest of that German ballad,” said a voice, abruptly.

The wayfarer started, and turning round, presented to Kenelm’s view a countenance in the ripest noon of manhood, with locks and beard of a deep rich auburn, bright blue eyes, and a wonderful nameless charm both of feature and expression, very cheerful, very frank, and not without a certain nobleness of character which seemed to exact respect.

“I beg your pardon for my interruption,” said Kenelm, lifting his hat ; “but I overheard you reciting ; and though I suppose your verses are a translation from the German, I don’t remember anything like them in such popular German poets as I happen to have read.”

“It is not a translation, sir,” replied the itinerant. “I was only trying to string together some ideas that came into my head this fine morning.”

“You are a poet, then ?” said Kenelm, seating himself on the bench.

“I dare not say poet. I am a verse-maker.”

“Sir, I know there is a distinction. Many poets of the

present day, considered very good, are uncommonly bad verse-makers. For my part, I could more readily imagine them to be good poets if they did not make verses at all. But can I not hear the rest of the ballad?"

"Alas! the rest of the ballad is not yet made. It is rather a long subject, and my flights are very brief."

"That is much in their favour, and very unlike the poetry in fashion. You do not belong, I think, to this neighbourhood. Are you and your dog travelling far?"

"It is my holiday time, and I ramble on through the summer. I am travelling far, for I travel till September. Life amid summer fields is a very joyous thing."

"Is it indeed?" said Kenelm, with much *naïveté*. "I should have thought that, long before September, you would have got very much bored with the fields and the dog and yourself altogether. But, to be sure, you have the resource of verse-making, and that seems a very pleasant and absorbing occupation to those who practise it—from our old friend Horace, kneading laboured Alcaics into honey in his summer rambles among the watered woodlands of Tibur, to Cardinal Richelieu employing himself on French rhymes in the intervals between chopping off nobleman's heads. It does not seem to signify much whether the verses be good or bad, so far as the pleasure of the verse-maker himself is concerned; for Richelieu was as much charmed with his occupation as Horace was, and his verses were certainly not Horatian."

"Surely at your age, sir, and with your evident education——"

"Say culture; that's the word in fashion nowadays."

"—Well, your evident culture—you must have made verses."

"Latin verses—yes—and occasionally Greek. I was obliged to do so at school. It did not amuse me."

"Try English."

Kenelm shook his head. "Not I. Every cobbler should stick to his last."

"Well, put aside the verse-making: don't you find a sensible enjoyment in those solitary summer walks, when you have Nature all to yourself—enjoyment in marking all the mobile

evanescent changes in her face—her laugh, her smile, her tears, her very frown!”

“Assuming that by Nature you mean a mechanical series of external phenomena, I object to your speaking of a machinery as if it were a person of the feminine gender—*her* laugh, *her* smile, &c. As well talk of the laugh and smile of a steam-engine. But to descend to common sense. I grant there is some pleasure in solitary rambles in fine weather and amid varying scenery. You say that it is a holiday excursion that you are enjoying. I presume, therefore, that you have some practical occupation which consumes the time that you do not devote to a holiday?”

“Yes; I am not altogether an idler. I work sometimes, though not so hard as I ought. ‘Life is earnest’, as the poet says. But I and my dog are rested now, and as I have still a long walk before me, I must wish you good-day.”

“I fear,” said Kenelm, with a grave and sweet politeness of tone and manner, which he could command at times, and which, in its difference from merely conventional urbanity, was not without fascination—“I fear that I have offended you by a question that must have seemed to you inquisitive—perhaps impertinent; accept my excuse; it is very rarely that I meet any one who interests me; and you do.” As he spoke he offered his hand, which the wayfarer shook very cordially.

“I should be a churl indeed if your question could have given me offence. It is rather perhaps I who am guilty of impertinence, if I take advantage of my seniority in years, and tender you a counsel. Do not despise Nature, or regard her as a steam-engine; you will find in her a very agreeable and conversable friend, if you will cultivate her intimacy. And I don’t know a better mode of doing so at your age, and with your strong limbs, than putting a knapsack on your shoulders, and turning foot-traveller, like myself.”

“Sir, I thank you for your counsel; and I trust we may meet again, and interchange ideas as to the thing you call Nature—a thing which science and art never appear to see with the same eyes. If to an artist Nature has a soul, why, so has a steam-engine. Art gifts with soul all matter that it contemplates;

science turns all that is already gifted with soul into matter Good-day, sir."

Here Kenelm turned back abruptly, and the traveller went his way, silently and thoughtfully.

CHAPTER XV.

KENELM retraced his steps homeward under the shade of his "old hereditary trees." One might have thought his path along the greenswards, and by the side of the babbling rivulet, was pleasanter and more conducive to peaceful thoughts than the broad, dusty thoroughfare along which plodded the wanderer he had quitted. But the man addicted to reverie forms his own landscapes and colours his own skies.

"It is," soliloquised Kenelm Chillingly, "a strange yearning I have long felt—to get out of myself—to get, as it were, into another man's skin—and have a little variety of thought and emotion. One's self is always the same self; and that is why I yawn so often. But if I can't get into another man's skin, the next best thing is to get as unlike myself as I possibly can do. Let me see what is myself. Myself is Kenelm Chillingly, son and heir to a rich gentleman. But a fellow with a knapsack on his back, sleeping at wayside inns, is not at all like Kenelm Chillingly—especially if he is very short of money, and may come to want a dinner. Perhaps that sort of fellow may take a livelier view of things; he can't take a duller one. Courage, Myself,—you and I can but try."

For the next two days Kenelm was observed to be unusually pleasant. He yawned much less frequently, walked with his father, played piquet with his mother, was more like other people. Sir Peter was charmed; he ascribed this happy change to the preparations he was making for Kenelm's travelling in style. The proud father was in active correspondence with his great London friends, seeking letters of introduction to Kenelm for all the courts of Europe. Port-

manteaus, with every modern convenience, were ordered ; an experienced courier, who could talk all languages--and cook French dishes if required--was invited to name his terms. In short, every arrangement worthy a young patrician's entrance into the great world was in rapid progress, when suddenly Kenelm Chillingly disappeared, leaving behind him on Sir Peter's library table the following letter :—

“MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—Obedient to your desire, I depart in search of real life and real persons, or of the best imitations of them. Forgive me, I beseech you, if I commence that search in my own way. I have seen enough of ladies and gentlemen for the present—they must be all very much alike in every part of the world. You desired me to be amused. I go to try if that be possible. Ladies and gentlemen are not amusing; the more ladylike or gentlemanlike they are, the more insipid I find them. My dear father, I go in quest of adventure like Amadis of Gaul, like Don Quixote, like Gil Blas, like Roderick Random—like, in short, the only people seeking real life—the people who never existed except in books. I go on foot, I go alone. I have provided myself with a larger amount of money than I ought to spend, because every man must buy experience, and the first fees are heavy. In fact, I have put fifty pounds into my pocket-book and into my purse five sovereigns and seventeen shillings. This sum ought to last me a year, but I dare say inexperience will do me out of it in a month, so we will count it as nothing. Since you have asked me to fix my own allowance, I will beg you kindly to commence it this day in advance, by an order to your banker to cash my cheques to the amount of five pounds, and to the same amount monthly—viz., at the rate of sixty pounds a-year. With that sum I can't starve, and if I want more it may be amusing to work for it. Pray don't send after me, or institute inquiries, or disturb the household and set all the neighbourhood talking, by any mention either of my project or of your surprise at it. I will not fail to write to you from time to time.

“You will judge best what to say to my dear mother. If you tell her the truth, which of course I should do did I tell

her anything, my request is virtually frustrated, and I shall be the talk of the county. You, I know, don't think telling fibs is immoral, when it happens to be convenient, as it would be in this case.

"I expect to be absent a year or eighteen months; if I prolong my travels it shall be in the way you proposed. I will then take my place in polite society, call upon you to pay all expenses, and fib on my own account to any extent required by that world of fiction which is peopled by illusions and governed by shams.

"Heaven bless you, my dear father, and be quite sure that if I get into any trouble requiring a friend, it is to you I shall turn. As yet I have no other friend on earth, and with prudence and good-luck I may escape the infliction of any other friend. —Yours ever affectionately,

"KENELM.

"*P.S.*—Dear father, I open my letter in your library to say again 'Bless you,' and to tell you how fondly I kissed your old beaver gloves, which I found on the table."

When Sir Peter came to that postscript he took off his spectacles and wiped them—they were very moist.

Then he fell into a profound meditation. Sir Peter was, as I have said, a learned man; he was also in some things a sensible man, and he had a strong sympathy with the humorous side of his son's crotchety character. What was to be said to Lady Chillingly? That matron was quite guiltless of any crime which should deprive her of a husband's confidence in a matter relating to her only son. She was a virtuous matron—morals irreproachable—manners dignified, and *she-baronet*y. Any one seeing her for the first time would intuitively say, "Your ladyship." Was this a matron to be suppressed in any well-ordered domestic circle? Sir Peter's conscience loudly answered "No;" but when, putting conscience into his pocket, he regarded the question at issue as a man of the world, Sir Peter felt that to communicate the contents of his son's letter to Lady Chillingly would be the foolishhest thing he could possibly do. Did she

know that Kenelm had absconded with the family dignity invested in his very name, no marital authority short of such abuses of power as constitute the offence of cruelty in a wife's action for divorce from social board and nuptial bed, could prevent Lady Chillingly from summoning all the grooms, sending them in all directions, with strict orders to bring back the runaway dead or alive—the walls would be placarded with handbills, "Strayed from his home," &c., the police would be telegraphing private instructions from town to town—the scandal would stick to Kenelm Chillingly for life, accompanied with vague hints of criminal propensities and insane hallucinations—he would be ever afterwards pointed out as "THE MAN WHO HAD DISAPPEARED." And to disappear and to turn up again, instead of being murdered, is the most hateful thing a man can do; all the newspapers bark at him, 'Tray, Blanche, Sweetheart, and all;' strict explanations of the unseemly fact of his safe existence are demanded in the name of public decorum, and no explanations are accepted—it is life saved, character lost.

Sir Peter seized his hat and walked forth, not to deliberate whether to fib or not to fib to the wife of his bosom, but to consider what kind of fib would the most quickly sink into the bosom of his wife.

A few turns to and fro on the terrace sufficed for the conception and maturing of the fib selected; a proof that Sir Peter was a practised fibber. He re-entered the house, passed into her ladyship's habitual sitting-room, and said with careless gaiety, "My old friend the Duke of Clareville is just setting off on a tour to Switzerland with his family. His youngest daughter, Lady Jane, is a pretty girl, and would not be a bad match for Kenelm."

"Lady Jane, the youngest daughter with fair hair, whom I saw last as a very charming child, nursing a lovely doll presented to her by the Empress Eugénie. A good match indeed for Kenelm."

"I am glad you agree with me. Would it not be a favourable step towards that alliance, and an excellent thing for Kenelm generally, if he were to visit the Continent as one of the Duke's travelling party?"

"Of course it would."

"Then you approve what I have done—the Duke starts the day after to-morrow, and I have packed Kenelm off to town, with a letter to my old friend. You will excuse all leave-taking. You know that though the best of sons he is an odd fellow; and seeing that I had talked him into it, I struck while the iron was hot, and sent him off by the express at nine o'clock this morning, for fear that if I allowed any delay he would talk himself out of it."

"Do you mean to say Kenelm is actually gone? Good gracious!"

Sir Peter stole softly from the room, and summoning his valet, said, "I have sent Mr. Chillingly to London. Pack up the clothes he is likely to want, so that he can have them sent at once, whenever he writes for them."

And thus, by a judicious violation of truth on the part of his father, that exemplary truth-teller Kenelm Chillingly saved the honour of his house and his own reputation from the breath of scandal and the inquisition of the police. He was not "THE MAN WHO HAD DISAPPEARED."

BOOK II.



CHAPTER I.

KENELM CHILLINGLY had quitted the paternal home at daybreak before any of the household was astir.

“Unquestionably,” said he, as he walked along the solitary lanes—“unquestionably I begin the world as poets begin poetry, an imitator and a plagiarist. I am imitating an itinerant verse-maker, as, no doubt, he began by imitating some other maker of verse. But if there be anything in me, it will work itself out in original form. And after all, the verse-maker is not the inventor of ideas. Adventure on foot is a notion that remounts to the age of fable. Hercules, for instance,—that was the way in which he got to heaven, as a foot-traveller. How solitary the world is at this hour! Is it not for that reason that this is of all hours the most beautiful?”

Here he paused, and looked around and above. It was the very height of summer. The sun was just rising over gentle sloping uplands. All the dews on the hedgerows sparkled. There was not a cloud in the heavens. Uprose from the green blades of corn a solitary skylark. His voice woke up the other birds. A few minutes more and the joyous concert began. Kenelm reverently doffed his hat, and bowed his head in mute homage and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT nine o'clock Kenelm entered a town some twelve miles distant from his father's house, and towards which he had designedly made his way, because in that town he was scarcely if at all known by sight, and he might there make the purchases he required without attracting any marked observation. He had selected for his travelling costume a shooting-dress, as the simplest and least likely to belong to his rank as a gentleman. But still in its very cut there was an air of distinction, and every labourer he had met on the way had touched his hat to him. Besides, who wears a shooting-dress in the middle of June, or a shooting-dress at all, unless he be either a game-keeper or a gentleman licensed to shoot?

Kenelm entered a large store-shop for ready-made clothes and purchased a suit such as might be worn on Sundays by a small country yeoman or tenant-farmer of a petty holding,—a stout coarse broadcloth upper garment, half coat, half jacket, with waistcoat to match, strong corduroy trousers, a smart Belcher neckcloth, with a small stock of linen and woollen socks in harmony with the other raiment. He bought also a leathern knapsack, just big enough to contain this wardrobe, and a couple of books, which, with his combs and brushes, he had brought away in his pockets. For among all his trunks at home there was no knapsack.

These purchases made and paid for, he passed quickly through the town, and stopped at a humble inn at the outskirt, to which he was attracted by the notice, "Refreshment for man and beast." He entered a little sanded parlour, which at that hour he had all to himself, called for breakfast, and devoured the best part of a fourpenny loaf with a couple of hard eggs.

Thus recruited, he again sallied forth, and deviating into a thick wood by the roadside, he exchanged the habiliments with which he had left home for those he had purchased, and by the help of one or two big stones sunk the relinquished garments into a small but deep pool which he was lucky enough to

find in a bush-grown dell much haunted by snipes in the winter.

"Now," said Kenelm, "I really begin to think I have got out of myself. I am in another man's skin; for what, after all, is a skin but a soul's clothing, and what is clothing but a decener skin? Of its own natural skin every civilised soul is ashamed. It is the height of impropriety for any one but the lowest kind of savage to show it. If the purest soul now existent upon earth, the Pope of Rome's or the Archbishop of Canterbury's, were to pass down the Strand with the skin which nature gave to it bare to the eye, it would be brought up before a magistrate, prosecuted by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and committed to jail as a public nuisance.

"Decidedly I am now in another man's skin. Kenelm Chillingly, I no longer

"Remain

"Yours faithfully;

"But am,

"With profound consideration,

"Your obedient humble servant."

With light step and elated crest, the wanderer, thus transformed, sprang from the wood into the dusty thoroughfare.

He had travelled on for about an hour, meeting but few other passengers, when he heard to the right a loud shrill young voice, "Help, help!—I will not go—I tell you, I will not!" Just before him stood, by a high five-barred gate, a pensive grey cob attached to a neat-looking gig. The bridle was loose on the cob's neck. The animal was evidently accustomed to stand quietly when ordered to do so, and glad of the opportunity.

The cries, "Help, help!" were renewed, mingled with louder tones in a rougher voice, tones of wrath and menace. Evidently these sounds did not come from the cob. Kenelm looked over the gate, and saw a few yards distant in a grass field, a well-dressed boy struggling violently against a stout middle-aged man who was rudely hauling him along by the arm.

The chivalry natural to a namesake of the valiant Sir

Kenelm Digby was instantly aroused. He vaulted over the gate, seized the man by the collar, and exclaimed, "For shame! what are you doing to that poor boy?—let him go!"

"Why the devil do you interfere?" cried the stout man—his eyes glaring and his lips foaming with rage. "Ah, are you the villain?—yes, no doubt of it. I'll give it to you, jackanapes," and still grasping the boy with one hand, with the other the stout man darted a blow at Kenelm, from which nothing less than the practised pugilistic skill and natural alertness of the youth thus suddenly assaulted could have saved his eyes and nose. As it was, the stout man had the worst of it; the blow was parried, returned with a dexterous manœuvre of Kenelm's right foot in Cornish fashion, and *procumbit humi bos*—the stout man lay sprawling on his back. The boy, thus released, seized hold of Kenelm by the arm, and hurrying him along up the field, cried, "Come, come before he gets up! save me! save me!" Ere he had recovered his own surprise, the boy had dragged Kenelm to the gate, and jumped into the gig, sobbing forth, "Get in, get in, I can't drive; get in, and drive—you. Quick! Quick!"

"But—" began Kenelm.

"Get in, or I shall go mad." Kenelm obeyed, the boy gave him the reins, and seizing the whip himself, applied it lustily to the cob. On sprang the cob. "Stop—stop—stop, thief!—villain!—Holloa!—thieves—thieves—thieves!—stop!" cried a voice behind. Kenelm involuntarily turned his head and beheld the stout man perched upon the gate and gesticulating furiously. It was but a glimpse; again the whip was plied, the cob frantically broke into a gallop, the gig jolted and bumped and swerved, and it was not till they had put a good mile between themselves and the stout man that Kenelm succeeded in obtaining possession of the whip, and calming the cob into a rational trot.

"Young gentleman," then said Kenelm, "perhaps you will have the goodness to explain."

"By and by; get on, that's a good fellow; you shall be well paid for it—well and handsomely."

Quoth Kenelm, gravely, "I know that in real life payment

and service naturally go together. But we will put aside the payment till you tell me what is to be the service. And first, whither am I to drive you? We are coming to a place where three roads meet; which of the three shall I take?"

"Oh, I don't know; there is a finger-post. I want to get to—but it is a secret; you'll not betray me? Promise—swear."

"I don't swear except when I am in a passion, which, I am sorry to say, is very seldom; and I don't promise till I know what I promise; neither do I go on driving runaway boys in other men's gigs unless I know that I am taking them to a safe place, where their papas and mammas can get at them."

"I have no papa, no mamma," said the boy dolefully, and with quivering lips.

"Poor boy! I suppose that burly brute is your schoolmaster, and you are running away home for fear of a flogging."

The boy burst out laughing; a pretty, silvery, merry laugh, it thrilled through Kenelm Chillingly. "No, he would not flog me; he is not a schoolmaster; he is worse than that."

"Is it possible? What is he?"

"An uncle."

"Hum! uncles are proverbial for cruelty; were so in the classical days, and Richard III. was the only scholar in his family."

"Eh! classical and Richard III.!" said the boy, startled, and looking attentively at the pensive driver. "Who are you? you talk like a gentleman."

"I beg pardon. I'll not do so again if I can help it." "Decidedly," thought Kenelm, "I am beginning to be amused. What a blessing it is to get into another man's skin, and another man's gig too!" Aloud, "Here we are at the finger-post. If you are running away from your uncle, it is time to inform me where you are running to."

Here the boy leaned over the gig and examined the finger-post. Then he clapped his hands joyfully.

"All right! I thought so—'To Tor-Hadham, eighteen miles.' That's the road to Tor-Hadham."

"Do you mean to say I am to drive you all that way—eighteen miles?"

"Yes."

"And to whom are you going?"

"I will tell you by and by. Do go on—do, pray. I can't drive—never drove in my life—or I would not ask you. Pray, pray, don't desert me! If you are a gentleman you will not; and if you are not a gentleman, I have got 10*l*. in my purse, which you shall have when I am safe at Tor-Hadham. Don't hesitate; my whole life is at stake!" And the boy began once more to sob.

Kenelm directed the pony's head towards Tor-Hadham, and the boy ceased to sob.

"You are a good, dear fellow," said the boy, wiping his eyes. "I am afraid I am taking you very much out of your road."

"I have no road in particular, and would as soon go to Tor-Hadham, which I have never seen, as anywhere else. I am but a wanderer on the face of the earth."

"Have you lost your papa and mamma too? Why, you are not much older than I am."

"Little gentleman," said Kenelm, gravely, "I am just of age and you, I suppose, are about fourteen."

"What fun!" cried the boy, abruptly. "Isn't it fun?"

"It will not be fun if I am sentenced to penal servitude for stealing your uncle's gig, and robbing his little nephew of 10*l*. By the by, that choleric relation of yours meant to knock down somebody else when he struck at me. He asked, 'Are *you* the villain?' Pray who is the villain? he is evidently in your confidence."

"Villain! he is the most honourable, high-minded—— But no matter now; I'll introduce you to him when we reach Tor-Hadham. Whip that pony, he is crawling."

"It is up hill; a good man spares his beast."

No art and no eloquence could extort from his young companion any further explanation than Kenelm had yet received; and indeed, as the journey advanced, and they approached their destination, both parties sank into silence. Kenelm was seriously considering that his first day's experience of real life in the skin of another had placed in some peril his own. He had knocked down a man evidently respectable and well to do,

had carried off that man's nephew, and made free with that man's goods and chattels—*i.e.*, his gig and horse. All this might be explained satisfactorily to a justice of the peace, but how? By returning to his former skin; by avowing himself to be Kenelm Chillingly, a distinguished university medalist, heir to no ignoble name and some 10,000*l.* a year. But then what a scandal! he who abhorred scandal; in vulgar parlance, what a "row!" he who denied that the very word "row" was sanctioned by any classic authorities in the English language. He would have to explain how he came to be found disguised, carefully disguised, in garments such as no baronet's eldest son—even though that baronet be the least ancestral man of mark whom it suits the convenience of a First Minister to recommend to the Sovereign for exaltation over the rank of Mister—was ever beheld in, unless he had taken flight to the gold-diggings. Was this a position in which the heir of the Chillinglys, a distinguished family, whose coat of arms dated from the earliest authenticated period of English heraldry under Edward III. as Three Fishes *azur*, could be placed without grievous slur on the cold and ancient blood of the Three Fishes?

And then individually to himself, Kenelm, irrespectively of the Three Fishes. What a humiliation! He had put aside his respected father's deliberate preparations for his entrance into real life; he had perversely chosen his own walk on his own responsibility; and here, before half the first day was over what an infernal scrape he had walked himself into! And what was his excuse? A wretched little boy, sobbing and chuckling by turns, and yet who was clever enough to twist Kenelm Chillingly round his finger; twist *him*—a man who thought himself so much wiser than his parents—a man who had gained honours at the university—a man of the gravest temperament—*a* man of so nicely critical a turn of mind that there was not a law of art or nature in which he did not detect a flaw,—that he should get himself into this mess was, to say the least of it, an uncomfortable reflection.

The boy himself, as Kenelm glanced at him from time to time, became impish and Will-of-the-Wisp-ish. Sometimes he laughed to himself loudly, sometimes he wept to himself

quietly ; sometimes, neither laughing nor weeping, he seemed absorbed in reflection. Twice as they came nearer to the town of Tor-Hadham, Kenelm nudged the boy, and said, "My boy, I must talk with you ;" and twice the boy, withdrawing his arm from the nudge, had answered dreamily,

"Hush ! I am thinking."

And so they entered the town of Tor-Hadham ; the cob very much done up.

CHAPTER III.

"Now, young sir," said Kenelm, in a tone calm, but peremptory—"now we are in the town, where am I to take you ? and wherever it be, there to say good-bye."

"No, not good-bye. Stay with me a little bit. I begin to feel frightened, and I am so friendless ;" and the boy, who had before resented the slightest nudge on the part of Kenelm, now wound his arm into Kenelm's, and clung to him caressingly.

I don't know what my readers have hitherto thought of Kenelm Chillingly, but amid all the curves and windings of his whimsical humour, there was one way that went straight to his heart—you had only to be weaker than himself, and ask his protection.

He turned round abruptly ; he forgot all the strangeness of his position, and replied : "Little brute that you are, I'll be shot if I forsake you if in trouble. But some compassion, is also due to the cob—for his sake say where we are to stop."

"I am sure I can't say ; I never was here before. Let us go to a nice quiet inn. Drive slowly—we'll look out for one."

Tor-Hadham was a large town, not nominally the capital of the county, but in point of trade, and bustle, and life, virtually the capital. The straight street, through which the cob went as slowly as if he had been drawing a Triumphal Car up the Sacred Hill, presented an animated appearance. The shops had handsome façades and plate-glass windows ; the pavements exhibited a lively concourse, evidently not merely of

business, but of pleasure, for a large proportion of the passers-by was composed of the fair sex, smartly dressed, many of them young, and some pretty. In fact a regiment of Her Majesty's —th Hussars had been sent into the town two days before, and between the officers of that fortunate regiment, and the fair sex in that hospitable town, there was a natural emulation which should make the greater number of slain and wounded. The advent of these heroes, professional subtracters from hostile, and multipliers of friendly, populations, gave a stimulus to the caterers for those amusements which bring young folks together—archery-meetings, rifle shootings, concerts, balls, announced in bills attached to boards and walls, and exposed at shop-windows.

The boy looked eagerly forth from the gig, scanning especially these advertisements, till at length he uttered an excited exclamation, "Ah, I was right—there it is!"

"There what is?" asked Kenelm. "The inn?" His companion did not answer, but Kenelm following the boy's eye perceived an immense hand-bill.

"TO-MORROW NIGHT THEATRE OPENS.

RICHARD III. MR. COMPTON."

"Do just ask where the theatre is," said the boy, in a whisper, turning away his head.

Kenelm stopped the cob, made the inquiry, and was directed to take the next turning to the right. In a few minutes the compo portico of an ugly dilapidated building, dedicated to the Dramatic Muses, presented itself at the angle of a dreary, deserted lane. The walls were placarded with play-bills, in which the name of Compton stood forth as gigantic as capitals could make it. The boy drew a sigh. "Now," said he, "let us look out for an inn near here—the nearest."

No inn, however, beyond the rank of a small and questionable looking public-house, was apparent, until at a distance somewhat remote from the theatre, and in a quaint, old-fashioned, deserted square, a neat, newly-whitewashed house displayed

upon its frontispiece, in large black letters of funereal aspect, "Temperance Hotel."

"Stop," said the boy; "don't you think that would suit us? it looks quiet."

"Could not look more quiet if it were a tombstone," replied Kenelm.

The boy put his hand upon the reins and stopped the cob. The cob was in that condition that the slightest touch sufficed to stop him, though he turned his head somewhat ruefully as if in doubt whether hay and corn would be within the regulations of a Temperance Hotel. Kenelm descended and entered the house. A tidy woman emerged from a sort of glass cupboard which constituted the bar, minus the comforting drinks associated with the *beau idéal* of a bar, but which displayed instead two large decanters of cold water with tumblers *à discretion*, and sundry plates of thin biscuits and sponge-cakes. This tidy woman politely inquired what was his "pleasure."

"Pleasure," answered Kenelm, with his usual gravity "is not the word I should myself have chosen. But could you oblige my horse—I mean *that* horse—with a stall and a feed of oats and that young gentleman and myself with a private room and a dinner?"

"Dinner!" echoed the hostess—"dinner!"

"A thousand pardons, ma'am. But if the word 'dinner' shock you, I retract it, and would say instead, 'something to eat and drink.'"

"Drink! This is strictly a Temperance Hotel, sir."

"Oh, if you don't eat and drink here," exclaimed Kenelm, fiercely, for he was famished, "I wish you good morning."

"Stay a bit, sir. We do eat and drink here. But we are very simple folks. We allow no fermented liquors."

"Not even a glass of beer?"

"Only ginger-beer. Alcohols are strictly forbidden. We have tea, and coffee, and milk. But most of our customers prefer the pure liquid. As for eating, sir—anything you order, in reason."

Kenelm shook his head and was retreating, when the boy, who had sprung from the gig and overheard the conversation, cried, petulantly, "What does it signify? Who wants fermented

liquors? Water will do very well. And as for dinner,—anything convenient. Please, ma'am, show us into a private room; I am so tired." The last words were said in a caressing manner, and so prettily, that the hostess at once changed her tone, and muttering, "Poor boy!" and, in a still more subdued mutter, "What a pretty face he has!" nodded, and led the way up a very clean old-fashioned staircase.

"But the horse and gig—where are they to go?" said Kenelm, with a pang of conscience on reflecting how ill treated hitherto had been both horse and owner.

"Oh, as for the horse and gig, sir, you will find Jukes's livery-stables a few yards farther down. We don't take in horses ourselves—our customers seldom keep them; but you will find the best of accommodation at Jukes's.

Kenelm conducted the cob to the livery-stables thus indicated, and waited to see him walked about to cool, well rubbed down, and made comfortable over half a peck of oats—for Kenelm Chillingly was a humane man to the brute creation—and then, in a state of ravenous appetite, returned to the Temperance Hotel, and was ushered into a small drawing-room, with a small bit of carpet in the centre, six small chairs with cane seats, prints on the walls descriptive of the various effects of intoxicating liquors upon sundry specimens of mankind—some resembling ghosts, others fiends, and all with a general aspect of beggary and perdition, contrasted by Happy-Family pictures—smiling wives, portly husbands, rosy infants, emblematic of the beatified condition of members of the Temperance Society.

A table with a spotless cloth, and knives and forks for two, chiefly, however, attracted Kenelm's attention.

The boy was standing by the window, seemingly gazing on a small aquarium which was there placed, and contained the usual variety of small fishes, reptiles, and insects, enjoying the pleasures of Temperance in its native element, including, of course, an occasional meal upon each other.

"What are they going to give us to eat?" inquired Kenelm. "It must be ready by this time I should think."

Here he gave a brisk tug at the bell-pull. The boy advanced from the window, and as he did so Kenelm was struck with the

grace of his bearing, and the improvement in his looks, now that he was without his hat, and rest and ablution had refreshed from heat and dust the delicate bloom of his complexion. There was no doubt about it that he was an exceedingly pretty boy, and if he lived to be a man would make many a lady's heart ache. It was with a certain air of gracious superiority such as is seldom warranted by superior rank if it be less than royal, and chiefly becomes a marked seniority in years, that this young gentleman, approaching the solemn heir of the Chillinglys, held out his hand and said—

“Sir, you have behaved extremely well, and I thank you very much.”

“Your Royal Highness is condescending to say so,” replied Kenelm Chillingly, bowing low, “but have you ordered dinner? and what are they going to give us? No one seems to answer the bell here. As it is a Temperance Hotel, probably all the servants are drunk.”

“Why should they be drunk at a Temperance Hotel?”

“Why! because, as a general rule, people who flagrantly pretend to anything are the reverse of that which they pretend to. A man who sets up for a saint is sure to be a sinner, and a man who boasts that he is a sinner, is sure to have some feeble, maudlin, snivelling bit of saintship about him which is enough to make him a humbug. Masculine honesty, whether it be saint-like or sinner-like, does not label itself either saint or sinner. Fancy St. Augustine labelling himself saint, or Robert Burns sinner; and therefore, though, little boy, you have probably not read the poems of Robert Burns, and have certainly not read the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, take my word for it, that both those personages were very good fellows; and with a little difference of training and experience, Burns might have written the *Confessions*, and Augustine the poems. Powers above! I am starving. What did you order for dinner, and when is it to appear?”

The boy, who had opened to an enormous width a naturally large pair of hazel eyes, while his tall companion in fustian trousers and Belcher neckcloth spoke thus patronisingly of Robert Burns and St. Augustine, now replied, with rather a deprecatory

and shamefaced aspect, "I am sorry I was not thinking of dinner. I was not so mindful of you as I ought to have been. The landlady asked me what we would have. I said, 'What you like;' and the landlady muttered something about ——" (here the boy hesitated).

"Yes. About what? Mutton-chops?"

"No. Cauliflowers and rice-pudding."

Kenelm Chillingly never swore, never raged. Where ruder beings of human mould swore or raged, he vented displeasure in an expression of countenance so pathetically melancholic and lugubrious that it would have melted the heart of an Hyrcanian tiger. He turned his countenance now on the boy, and murmuring "Cauliflower!—Starvation!" sank into one of the cane-bottomed chairs, and added quietly, "so much for human gratitude."

The boy was evidently smitten to the heart by the bitter sweetness of this reproach. There were almost tears in his voice, as he said falteringly, "Pray forgive me, I *was* ungrateful. I'll run down and see what there is;" and suiting the action to the word, he disappeared.

Kenelm remained motionless; in fact he was plunged into one of those reveries, or rather absorptions of inward and spiritual being, into which it is said that the consciousness of the Indian dervish can be, by prolonged fasting, preternaturally resolved. The appetite of all men of powerful muscular development is of a nature far exceeding the properties of any reasonable number of cauliflowers and rice-puddings to satisfy. Witness Hercules himself, whose cravings for substantial nourishment were the standing joke of the classic poets. I don't know that Kenelm Chillingly would have beaten the Theban Hercules either in fighting or in eating; but when he wanted to fight or when he wanted to eat, Hercules would have had to put forth all his strength not to be beaten.

After ten minutes' absence, the boy came back radiant. He tapped Kenelm on the shoulder, and said playfully, "I made them cut a whole loin into chops, besides the cauliflower, and such a big rice-pudding, and eggs and bacon too. Cheer up! it will be served in a minute."

"A—h!" said Kenelm.

"They are good people; they did not mean to stint you; but most of their customers, it seems, live upon vegetables and farinaceous food. There is a Society here formed upon that principle; the landlady says they are philosophers!"

At the word "philosophers" Kenelm's crest rose as that of a practised hunter at the cry of 'Yoiks! Tally-ho!' "Philosophers!" said he—"philosophers indeed! O ignoramuses, who do not even know the structure of the human tooth! Look you, little boy, if nothing were left on this earth of the present race of man, as we are assured upon great authority will be the case one of these days—and a mighty good rid-dance it will be—if nothing, I say, of man were left except fossils of his teeth and his thumbs, a philosopher of that superior race which will succeed to man would at once see in those relics all his characteristics and all his history; would say, comparing his thumb with the talons of an eagle, the claws of a tiger, the hoof of a horse, the owner of that thumb must have been lord over creatures with talons and claws and hoofs. You may say the monkey tribe has thumbs. True; but compare an ape's thumb with a man's—could the biggest ape's thumb have built Westminster Abbey? But even thumbs are trivial evidence of man as compared with his teeth. Look at his teeth!"—here Kenelm expanded his jaws from ear to ear and displayed semicircles of ivory, so perfect for the purposes of mastication that the most artistic dentist might have despaired of his power to imitate them—"look, I say, at his teeth!" The boy involuntarily recoiled. "Are the teeth those of a miserable cauliflower-eater? or is it purely by farinaceous food that the proprietor of teeth like man's obtains the rank of the sovereign destroyer of creation? No, little boy, no," continued Kenelm, closing his jaws, but advancing upon the infant, who at each stride receded towards the aquarium—"no; man is the master of the world, because of all created beings he devours the greatest variety and the greatest number of created things. His teeth evince that man can live upon every soil from the torrid to the frozen zone, because man can eat everything that other creatures cannot

eat. And the formation of his teeth proves it. A tiger can eat a deer—so can man; but a tiger can't eat an eel—man can. An elephant can eat cauliflowers and rice-pudding—so can man! but an elephant can't eat a beefsteak—man can. In sum, man can live everywhere, because he can eat anything, thanks to his dental formation!" concluded Kenelm, making a prodigious stride towards the boy. "Man, when everything else fails him, eats his own species."

"Don't; you frighten me," said the boy. "Aha!" clapping his hands with a sensation of gleeful relief, "here come the mutton-chops!"

A wonderfully clean, well-washed, indeed well-washed-out, middle-aged parlour-maid now appeared, dish in hand. Putting the dish on the table and taking off the cover, the hand-maiden said civilly, though frigidly, like one who lived upon salad and cold water, "Mistress is sorry to have kept you waiting, but she thought you were Vegetarians."

After helping his young friend to a mutton-chop, Kenelm helped himself, and replied, gravely, "Tell your mistress that if she had only given us vegetables, I should have eaten you. Tell her that though man is partially graminivorous, he is principally carnivorous. Tell her that though a swine eats cabbages and such like, yet where a swine can get a baby, it eats the baby. Tell her," continued Kenelm (now at his third chop), "that there is no animal that in digestive organs more resembles man than a swine. Ask her if there is any baby in the house; if so, it would be safe for the baby to send up some more chops."

As the acutest observer could rarely be quite sure when Kenelm Chillingly was in jest or in earnest, the parlour-maid paused a moment and attempted a pale smile. Kenelm lifted his dark eyes, unspeakably sad and profound, and said, mournfully, "I should be so sorry for the baby. Bring the chops!" The parlour-maid vanished. The boy laid down his knife and fork, and looked fixedly and inquisitively, on Kenelm. Kenelm, unheeding the look, placed the last chop on the boy's plate.

"No more," cried the boy, impulsively, and returned the chop to the dish. "I have dined—I have had enough."

"Little boy, you lie," said Kenelm; "you have not had enough to keep body and soul together. Eat that chop or I shall thrash you; whatever I say I do."

Somehow or other the boy felt quelled; he ate the chop in silence, again looked at Kenelm's face, and said to himself, "I am afraid."

The parlour-maid here entered with a fresh supply of chops and a dish of bacon and eggs, soon followed by a rice-pudding baked in a tin dish, and of size sufficient to have nourished a charity school. When the repast was finished, Kenelm seemed to forget the dangerous properties of the carnivorous animal; and stretching himself indolently out, appeared to be as innocently ruminative as the most domestic of animals graminivorous.

Then said the boy, rather timidly, "May I ask you another favour?"

"Is it to knock down another uncle, or to steal another gig and cob?"

"No, it is very simple: it is merely to find out the address of a friend here; and when found to give him a note from me."

"Does the commission press? 'After dinner, rest a while,' saith the proverb; and proverbs are so wise that no one can guess the author of them. They are supposed to be fragments of the philosophy of the antediluvians—came to us packed up in the ark."

"Really, indeed," said the boy, seriously. "How interesting! No, my commission does not press for an hour or so. Do you think, sir, they had any drama before the Deluge?"

"Drama! not a doubt of it. Men who lived one or two thousand years had time to invent and improve everything; and a play could have had its natural length then. It would not have been necessary to crowd the whole history of Macbeth, from his youth to his old age, into an absurd epitome of three hours. One cannot trace a touch of real human nature in any actor's delineation of that very interesting Scotchman, because the actor always comes on the stage as if he were the same age when he murdered Duncan, and when, in his sear and yellow leaf, he was lopped off by Macduff."

"Do you think Macbeth was young when he murdered Duncan?"

"Certainly. No man ever commits a first crime of violent nature, such as murder, after thirty; if he begins before, he may go on up to any age. But youth is the season for commencing those wrong calculations which belong to irrational hope and the sense of physical power. You thus read in the newspapers that the persons who murder their sweethearts are generally from two to six and twenty; and persons who murder from other motives than love—that is, from revenge, avarice, or ambition—are generally about twenty-eight—Iago's age. Twenty-eight is the usual close of the active season for getting rid of one's fellow-creatures—a prize-fighter falls off after that age. I take it that Macbeth was about twenty-eight when he murdered Duncan, and from about fifty-four to sixty when he began to whine about missing the comforts of old age. But can any audience understand that difference of years in seeing a three-hours' play; or does any actor ever pretend to impress it on the audience, and appear as twenty-eight in the first act and a sexagenarian in the fifth?"

"I never thought of that," said the boy, evidently interested. "But I never saw *Macbeth*. I have seen *Richard III.*—is not that nice? Don't you dote on the play? I do. What a glorious life an actor's must be!"

Kenelm, who had been hitherto rather talking to himself than to his youthful companion, here roused his attention, looked on the boy intently, and said—

"I see you are stage-stricken. You have run away from home in order to turn player, and I should not wonder if this note you want me to give is for the manager of the theatre or one of his company."

The young face that encountered Kenelm's dark eye became very flushed, but set and *défiant* in its expression.

"And what if it were—would not you give it?"

"What! help a child of your age, run away from his home, to go upon the stage against the consent of his relations? Certainly not."

"I am not a child; but that has nothing to do with it.

I don't want to go on the stage, at all events without the consent of the person who has a right to dictate my actions. My note is not to the manager of the theatre, nor to one of his company, but it is to a gentleman who condescends to act here for a few nights—a thorough gentleman—a great actor—my friend, the only friend I have in the world. I say frankly I have run away from home so that he may have that note, and if you will not give it some one else will !”

The boy had risen while he spoke, and he stood erect beside the recumbent Kenelm, his lips quivering, his eyes suffused with suppressed tears, but his whole aspect resolute and determined. Evidently, if he did not get his own way in this, world, it would not be for want of will.

“I will take your note,” said Kenelm.

“There it is ; give it into the hands of the person it is addressed to—Mr. Herbert Compton.”

CHAPTER IV.

KENELM took his way to the theatre, and inquired of the doorkeeper for Mr. Herbert Compton. That functionary replied, “Mr. Compton does not act to-night, and is not in the house.”

“Where does he lodge ?”

The doorkeeper pointed to a grocer's shop on the other side of the way, and said, tersely, “There, private door—knock and ring.”

Kenelm did as he was directed. A slatternly maidservant opened the door, and, in answer to his interrogatory, said that Mr. Compton was at home, but at supper.

“I am sorry to disturb him,” said Kenelm, raising his voice, for he heard a clatter of knives and plates within a room hard by at his left, “but my business requires to see him forthwith ;” and pushing the maid aside, he entered at once the adjoining banquet-hall.

Before a savoury stew smelling strongly of onions sat a man very much at his ease, without coat or neckcloth, a decidedly handsome man—his hair cut short and his face closely shaven, as befits an actor who has wigs and beards of all hues and forms at his command. The man was not alone; opposite to him sat a lady, who might be a few years younger, of a somewhat faded complexion, but still pretty, with good stage features and a profusion of blond ringlets.

“Mr. Compton, I presume,” said Kenelm, with a solemn bow.

“My name is Compton: any message from the theatre? or what do you want with me?”

“I—nothing!” replied Kenelm; and then deepening his naturally mournful voice into tones ominous and tragic, continued—“By whom you are wanted let this explain;” there-with he placed in Mr. Compton’s hand the letter with which he was charged, and stretching his arms and interlacing his fingers in the *pose* of Talma as Julius Cæsar, added, “‘*Qu’en dis-tu, Brute?*’”

Whether it was from the sombre aspect and awe-inspiring delivery, or *ὑπόκρισις* of the messenger, or the sight of the handwriting on the address of the missive, Mr. Compton’s countenance suddenly fell, and his hand rested irresolute, as if not daring to open the letter.

“Never mind me, dear,” said the lady with blond ringlets, in a tone of stinging affability; “read your *billet-doux*; don’t keep the young man waiting, love!”

“Nonsense, Matilda, nonsense! *billet-doux* indeed! more likely a bill from Duke the tailor. Excuse me for a moment, my dear. Follow me, sir,” and rising, still with shirt-sleeves uncovered, he quitted the room, closing the door after him, motioned Kenelm into a small parlour on the opposite side of the passage, and by the light of a suspended gas-lamp ran his eye hastily over the letter, which, though it seemed very short drew from him sundry exclamations. “Good heavens! how very absurd! what’s to be done?” Then, thrusting the letter into his trousers-pocket, he fixed upon Kenelm a very brilliant pair of dark eyes, which soon dropped before the steadfast look of that saturnine adventurer.

"Are you in the confidence of the writer of this letter?" asked Mr. Compton, rather confusedly.

"I am not the confidant of the writer," answered Kenelm, "but for the time being I am the protector!"

"Protector!"

"Protector."

Mr. Compton again eyed the messenger, and this time fully realising the gladiatorial development of that dark stranger's physical form, he grew many shades paler, and involuntarily retreated towards the bell-pull.

After a short pause, he said, "I am requested to call on the writer. If I do so, may I understand that the interview will be strictly private?"

"So far as I am concerned, yes—on the condition that no attempt be made to withdraw the writer from the house."

"Certainly not—certainly not; quite the contrary," exclaimed Mr. Compton, with genuine animation. "Say I will call in half an hour."

"I will give your message," said Kenelm, with a polite inclination of his head; "and pray pardon me if I remind you that I styled myself the protector of your correspondent, and if the slightest advantage be taken of that correspondent's youth and inexperience, or the smallest encouragement be given to plans of abduction from home and friends, the stage will lose an ornament and Herbert Compton vanish from the scene." With these words Kenelm left the player standing aghast. Gaining the street-door, a lad with a band-box ran against him and was nearly upset.

"Stupid," cried the lad, "can't you see where you are going? Give this to Mrs. Compton."

"I should deserve the title you give if I did for nothing the business for which you are paid," replied Kenelm, sententiously, and striding on.

CHAPTER V.

"I HAVE fulfilled my mission," said Kenelm, on rejoining his travelling companion. "Mr. Compton said he would be here in half an hour."

"You saw him?"

"Of course; I promised to give your letter into his own hands."

"Was he alone?"

"No; at supper with his wife."

"His wife? what do you mean, sir?—wife! he has no wife."

"Appearances are deceitful. At least he was with a lady who called him 'dear' and 'love' in as spiteful a tone of voice as if she had been his wife; and as I was coming out of his street-door a lad who ran against me asked me to give a band-box to Mrs. Compton."

The boy turned as white as death, staggered back a few steps, and dropped into a chair.

A suspicion which, during his absence, had suggested itself to Kenelm's inquiring mind, now took strong confirmation. He approached softly, drew a chair close to the companion whom fate had forced upon him, and said in a gentle whisper—

"This is no boy's agitation. If you have been deceived or misled, and I can in any way advise or aid you, count on me as women under the circumstances count on men and gentlemen."

The boy started to his feet, and paced the room with disordered steps, and a countenance working with passions which he attempted vainly to suppress. Suddenly arresting his steps, he seized Kenelm's hand, pressed it convulsively, and said, in a voice struggling against a sob—

"I thank you—I bless you. Leave me now—I would be alone. Alone, too, I must face this man. There may be some mistake yet; go."

"You will promise not to leave the house till I return?"

"Yes, I promise that."

"And if it be as I fear, you will then let me counsel with and advise you?"

"Heaven help me, if so! Whom else should I trust to? Go—go!"

Kenelm once more found himself in the streets, beneath the mingled light of gas-lamps and the midsummer moon. He walked on mechanically till he reached the extremity of the town. There he halted, and seating himself on a milestone, indulged in these meditations:—

"Kenelm, my friend, you are in a still worse scrape than I thought you were an hour ago. You have evidently now got a woman on your hands. What on earth are you to do with her? A runaway woman, who, meaning to run off with somebody else—such are the crosses and contradictions in human destiny—has run off with you instead. What mortal can hope to be safe? The last thing I thought could befall me when I got up this morning was that I should have any trouble about the other sex before the day was over. If I were of an amatory temperament, the Fates might have some justification for leading me into this snare, but, as it is, those meddling old maids have none. Kenelm, my friend, do you think you ever can be in love? and, if you were in love, do you think you could be a greater fool than you are now?"

Kenelm had not decided this knotty question in the conference held with himself, when a light and soft strain of music came upon his ear. It was but from a stringed instrument, and might have sounded thin and tinkling but for the stillness of the night, and that peculiar addition of fulness which music acquires when it is borne along a tranquil air. Presently a voice in song was heard from the distance accompanying the instrument. It was a man's voice, a mellow and a rich voice, but Kenelm's ear could not catch the words. Mechanically he moved on towards the quarter from which the sounds came, for Kenelm Chillingly had music in his soul, though he was not quite aware of it himself. He saw before him a patch of greensward, on which grew a solitary elm with a seat for wayfarers beneath it. From this sward the ground receded in a wide semicircle bordered partly by shops, partly by the

tea-gardens of a pretty cottage-like tavern. Round the tables scattered throughout the gardens were grouped quiet customers, evidently belonging to the class of small tradespeople or superior artisans. They had an appearance of decorous respectability, and were listening intently to the music. So were many persons at the shop-doors and at the windows of upper rooms. On the sward, a little in advance of the tree, but beneath its shadow, stood the musician, and in that musician Kenelm recognised the wanderer from whose talk he had conceived the idea of the pedestrian excursion which had already brought him into a very awkward position. The instrument on which the singer accompanied himself was a guitar, and his song was evidently a love-song, though, as it was now drawing near to its close, Kenelm could but imperfectly guess at its general meaning. He heard enough to perceive that its words were at least free from the vulgarity which generally characterises street ballads, and were yet simple enough to please a very homely audience.

When the singer ended there was no applause; but there was evident sensation among the audience—a feeling as if something that had given a common enjoyment had ceased. Presently the white Pomeranian dog, who had hitherto kept himself out of sight under the seat of the elm-tree, advanced, with a small metal tray between his teeth, and, after looking round him deliberately, as if to select whom of the audience should be honoured with the commencement of a general subscription, gravely approached Kenelm, stood on his hind legs, stared at him, and presented the tray.

Kenelm dropped a shilling into that depository, and the dog, looking gratified, took his way towards the tea-gardens.

Lifting his hat, for he was, in his way, a very polite man, Kenelm approached the singer, and, trusting to the alteration in his dress for not being recognised by a stranger who had only once before encountered him he said—

“Judging by the little I heard, you sing very well, sir. May I ask who composed the words?”

“They are mine,” replied the singer.

“And the air?”

"Mine too."

"Accept my compliments. I hope you find these manifestations of genius lucrative?"

The singer, who had not hitherto vouchsafed more than a careless glance at the rustic garb of the questioner, now fixed his eyes full upon Kenelm, and said, with a smile, "Your voice betrays you, sir. We have met before."

"True; but I did not then notice your guitar, nor, though acquainted with your poetical gifts, suppose that you selected this primitive method of making them publicly known."

"Nor did I anticipate the pleasure of meeting you again in the character of Hobnail. Hist! let us keep each other's secret. I am known hereabouts by no other designation than that of the 'Wandering Minstrel.'"

"It is in the capacity of minstrel that I address you. If it be not an impertinent question, do you know any songs which take the other side of the case?"

"What case? I don't understand you, sir."

"The song I heard seemed in praise of that sham called love. Don't you think you could say something more new and more true, treating that aberration from reason with the contempt it deserves?"

"Not if I am to get my travelling expenses paid."

"What! the folly is so popular?"

"Does not your own heart tell you so?"

"Not a bit of it—rather the contrary. Your audience at present seem folks who live by work, and can have little time for such idle phantasies—for, as it is well observed by Ovid, a poet who wrote much on that subject, and professed the most intimate acquaintance with it, 'Idleness is the parent of love.' Can't you sing something in praise of a good dinner? Everybody who works hard has an appetite for food."

The singer again fixed on Kenelm his inquiring eye, but not detecting a vestige of humour in the grave face he contemplated, was rather puzzled how to reply, and therefore remained silent.

"I perceive," resumed Kenelm, "that my observations surprise you: the surprise will vanish on reflection. It has been said

by another poet, more reflective than Ovid, 'that the world is governed by love and hunger.' But hunger certainly has the lion's share of the government; and if a poet is really to do what he pretends to do—viz., represent nature—the greater part of his lays should be addressed to the stomach." Here, warming with his subject, Kenelm familiarly laid his hand on the musician's shoulder, and his voice took a tone bordering on enthusiasm. "You will allow that a man in the normal condition of health, does not fall in love every day. But in the normal condition of health he is hungry every day. Nay, in those early years when you poets say he is most prone to love, he is so especially disposed to hunger that less than three meals a day can scarcely satisfy his appetite. You may imprison a man for months, for years, nay, for his whole life—from infancy to any age which Sir Cornwall Lewis may allow him to attain—without letting him be in love at all. But if you shut him up for a week without putting something into his stomach, you will find him at the end of it as dead as a door-nail."

Here the singer, who had gradually retreated before the energetic advance of the orator, sank into the seat by the elm-tree and said pathetically, "Sir, you have fairly argued me down. Will you please to come to the conclusion which you deduce from your premises?"

"Simply this, that where you find one human being who cares about love, you will find a thousand susceptible to the charms of a dinner; and if you wish to be the popular minnesinger or troubadour of the age, appeal to nature, sir—appeal to nature; drop all hackneyed rhapsodies about a rosy cheek, and strike your lyre to the theme of a beefsteak."

The dog had for some minutes regained his master's side, standing on his hind legs, with the tray, tolerably well filled with copper coins, between his teeth; and now, justly aggrieved by the inattention which detained him in that artificial attitude, dropped the tray and growled at Kenelm.

At the same time there came an impatient sound from the audience in the tea-garden. They wanted another song for their money.

The singer rose, obedient to the summons. "Excuse me, sir; but I am called upon to——"

"To sing again?"

"Yes."

"And on the subject I suggest?"

"No, indeed."

"What! love, again?"

"I am afraid so."

"I wish you good evening then. You seem a well-educated man—more shame to you. Perhaps we may meet once more in our rambles, when the question can be properly argued out."

Kenelm lifted his hat, and turned on his heel. Before he reached the street, the sweet voice of the singer again smote his ears; but the only word distinguishable in the distance, ringing out at the close of the refrain, was "love."

"Fiddle-de-dee," said Kenelm.

CHAPTER VI.

AS Kenelm regained the street dignified by the edifice of the Temperance Hotel, a figure, dressed picturesquely in a Spanish cloak, brushed hurriedly by him, but not so fast as to be unrecognised as the tragedian. "Hem!" muttered Kenelm—"I don't think there is much triumph in that face. I suspect he has been scolded."

The boy—if Kenelm's travelling companion is still to be so designated—was leaning against the mantelpiece as Kenelm re-entered the dining-room. There was an air of profound dejection about the boy's listless attitude and in the drooping tearless eyes.

"My dear child," said Kenelm, in the softest tones of his plaintive voice, "do not honour me with any confidence that may be painful. But let me hope that you have dismissed for ever all thoughts of going on the stage."

"Yes," was the scarce audible answer,

"And now only remains the question, 'What is to be done?'"

"I am sure I don't know, and I don't care."

"Then you leave it to me to know and to care; and assuming for the moment as a fact, that which is one of the greatest lies in this mendacious world—namely, that all men are brothers, you will consider me as an elder brother, who will counsel and control you as he would—an imprudent young—sister. I see very well how it is. Somehow or other you, having first admired Mr. Compton as Romeo or Richard III., made his acquaintance as Mr. Compton. He allowed you to believe him a single man. In a romantic moment you escaped from your home, with the design of adopting the profession of the stage, and of becoming Mrs. Compton."

"Oh," broke out the girl, since her sex must now be declared—"oh," she exclaimed, with a passionate sob, "what a fool I have been! Only do not think worse of me than I deserve. The man did deceive me; he did not think I should take him at his word, and follow him here, or his wife would not have appeared. I should not have known he had one and—and——" here her voice was choked under her passion.

"But now you have discovered the truth, let us thank Heaven that you are saved from shame and misery. I must despatch a telegram to your uncle—give me his address."

"No, no."

"There is not a 'No' possible in this case, my child. Your reputation and your future must be saved. Leave me to explain all to your uncle. He is your guardian. I must send for him; nay; nay, there is no option. Hate me now for enforcing your will, you will thank me hereafter. And listen, young lady; if it does pain you to see your uncle, and encounter his reproaches, every fault must undergo its punishment. A brave nature undergoes it cheerfully, as a part of atonement. You are brave. Submit, and in submitting rejoice!"

There was something in Kenelm's voice and manner at once so kindly and so commanding, that the wayward nature he addressed fairly succumbed. She gave him her uncle's address, "John Bovill, Esq., Oakdale, near Westmere." And after giving it, fixed her eyes mournfully upon her young adviser,

and said with a simple, dreary pathos, "Now, will you esteem me more, or rather despise me less?"

She looked so young, nay, so childlike, as she thus spoke, that Kenelm felt a parental inclination to draw her on his lap and kiss away her tears. But he prudently conquered that impulse, and said, with a melancholy half-smile—

"If human beings despise each other for being young and foolish, the sooner we are exterminated by that superior race which is to succeed us on earth the better it will be. Adieu, till your uncle comes."

"What! you leave me here—alone?"

"Nay, if your uncle found me under the same roof, now that I know you are his niece, don't you think he would have a right to throw me out of the window? Allow me to practise for myself the prudence I preach to you. Send for the landlady to show you your room, shut yourself in there, go to bed, and don't cry more than you can help."

Kenelm shouldered the knapsack he had deposited in a corner of the room, inquired for the telegraph-office, despatched a telegram to Mr. Bovill, obtained a bedroom at the Commercial Hotel, and fell asleep, muttering these sensible words—

"Rochefoucauld was perfectly right when he said, 'Very few people would fall in love if they had not heard it so much talked about.'"

CHAPTER VII.

KENELM CHILLINGLY rose with the sun, according to his usual custom, and took his way to the Temperance Hotel. All in that sober building seemed still in the arms of Morpheus. He turned towards the stables in which he had left the grey cob, and had the pleasure to see that ill-used animal in the healthful process of rubbing down.

"That's right," said he to the ostler. "I am glad to see you are so early a riser."

"Why," quoth the ostler, "the gentleman as owns the pony

knocked me up at two o'clock in the morning, and pleased enough he was to see the creature again lying down in the clean straw."

"Oh, he has arrived at the hotel I presume?—a stout gentleman?"

"Yes, stout enough; and a passionate gentleman too. Came in a yellow and two posters, knocked up the Temperance and then knocked up me to see for the pony, and was much put out as he could not get any grog at the Temperance."

"I dare say he was. I wish he had got his grog; it might have put him in better humour. Poor little thing!" muttered Kenelm turning away; "I am afraid she is in for a regular vituperation. My turn next, I suppose. But he must be a good fellow to have come at once for his niece in the dead of the night."

About nine o'clock Kenelm presented himself again at the Temperance Hotel, inquired for Mr. Bovill, and was shown by the prim maidservant into the drawing-room, where he found Mr. Bovill seated amicably at breakfast with his niece, who of course was still in boy's clothing, having no other costume at hand. To Kenelm's great relief, Mr. Bovill rose from the table with a beaming countenance, and extending his hand to Kenelm, said—

"Sir, you are a gentleman; sit down, sit down, and take breakfast."

Then, as soon as the maid was out of the room, the uncle continued—

"I have heard all your good conduct from this young simpleton. Things might have been worse, sir."

Kenelm bowed his head, and drew the loaf towards him in silence. Then considering that some apology was due to his entertainer, he said—

"I hope you forgive me for that unfortunate mistake, when——"

"You knocked me down, or rather tripped me up. All right now. Elsie, give the gentleman a cup of tea. Pretty little rogue, is she not? and a good girl, in spite of her nonsense. It was all my fault letting her go to the play and be

intimate with Miss Lockit, a stage-stricken, foolish old maid, who ought to have known better than to lead her into all this trouble."

"No, uncle," cried the girl, resolutely; "don't blame her, nor any one but me."

Kenelm turned his dark eyes approvingly towards the girl, and saw that her lips were firmly set; there was an expression, not of grief nor shame, but compressed resolution in her countenance. But when her eyes met his they fell softly, and a blush mantled over her cheeks up to her very forehead.

"Ah!" said the uncle, "just like you, Elsie; always ready to take everybody's fault on your own shoulders. Well, well, say no more about that.—Now, my young friend, what brings you across the country tramping it on foot, eh? a young man's whim?" As he spoke, he eyed Kenelm very closely, and his look was that of an intelligent man not unaccustomed to observe the faces of those he conversed with. In fact a more shrewd man of business than Mr. Bovill is seldom met with on 'Change or in market.

"I travel on foot to please myself, sir," answered Kenelm, curtly, and unconsciously set on his guard.

"Of course you do," cried Mr. Bovill, with a jovial laugh. "But it seems you don't object to a chaise and pony whenever you can get them for nothing—ha, ha!—excuse me—a joke."

Herewith Mr. Bovill, still in excellent good-humour, abruptly changed the conversation to general matters—agricultural prospects—chance of a good harvest—corn trade—money market in general—politics—state of the nation. Kenelm felt there was an attempt to draw him out, to sound, to pump him, and replied only by monosyllables, generally significant of ignorance on the questions broached; and at the close, if the philosophical heir of the Chillinglys was in the habit of allowing himself to be surprised he would certainly have been startled when Mr. Bovill rose, slapped him on the shoulder, and said in a tone of great satisfaction, "Just as I thought, sir; you know nothing of these matters—you are a gentleman born and bred—your clothes can't disguise you, sir. Elsie was right. My dear, just

leave us for a few minutes ; I have something to say to our young friend. You can get ready meanwhile to go with me." Elsie left the table and walked obediently towards the doorway. There she halted a moment, turned round, and looked timidly towards Kenelm. He had naturally risen from his seat as she rose, and advanced some paces as if to open the door for her. Thus their looks encountered. He could not interpret that shy gaze of hers ; it was tender, it was deprecating, it was humble, it was pleading ; a man accustomed to female conquests might have thought it was something more, something in which was the key to all. But that something more was an unknown tongue to Kenelm Chillingly.

When the two men were alone, Mr. Bovill reseated himself and motioned to Kenelm to do the same. "Now, young sir," said the former, "you and I can talk at our ease. That adventure of yours yesterday may be the luckiest thing that could happen to you."

"It is sufficiently lucky if I have been of any service to your niece. But her own good sense would have been her safeguard if she had been alone, and discovered, as she would have done, that Mr. Compton had, knowingly or not, misled her to believe that he was a single man."

"Hang Mr. Compton ! we have done with him. I am a plain man, and I come to the point. It is you who have carried off my niece ; it is with you that she came to this hotel. Now when Elsie told me how well you had behaved, and that your language and manners were those of a real gentleman, my mind was made up. I guess pretty well what you are ; you are a gentleman's son—probably a college youth—not overburthened with cash—had a quarrel with your governor, and he keeps you short. Don't interrupt me. Well, Elsie is a good girl and a pretty girl, and will make a good wife, as wives go ; and, hark ye, she has 20,000*l*. So just confide in me—and if you don't like your parents to know about it till the thing's done and they be only got to forgive and bless you, why, you shall marry Elsie before you can say Jack Robinson."

For the first time in his life Kenelm Chillingly was seized with terror—terror and consternation. His jaw dropped—

his tongue was palsied. If hair ever stands on end, his hair did. At last, with superhuman effort, he gasped out the word, "Marry!"

"Yes—marry. If you are a gentleman you are bound to it. You have compromised my niece—a respectable, virtuous girl, sir—an orphan, but not unprotected. I repeat, it is you who have plucked her from my very arms, and with violence and assault; eloped with her; and what would the world say if it knew? Would it believe in your prudent conduct?—conduct only to be explained by the respect you felt due to your future wife. And where will you find a better? Where will you find an uncle who will part with his ward and 20,000*l.* without asking if you have a sixpence? and the girl has taken a fancy to you—I see it; would she have given up that player so easily if you had not stolen her heart? Would you break that heart? No, young man—you are not a villain. Shake hands on it!"

"Mr. Bovill," said Kenelm, recovering his wonted equanimity, "I am inexpressibly flattered by the honour you propose to me, and I do not deny that Miss Elsie is worthy of a much better man than myself. But I have inconceivable prejudices against the connubial state. If it be permitted to a member of the Established Church to cavil at any sentence written by St. Paul—and I think that liberty may be permitted to a simple layman, since eminent members of the clergy criticise the whole Bible as freely as if it were the history of Queen Elizabeth by Mr. Froude—I should demur at the doctrine that it is better to marry than to burn; I myself should prefer burning. With these sentiments it would ill become any one entitled to that distinction of 'gentleman' which you confer on me to lead a fellow-victim to the sacrificial altar. As for any reproach attached to Miss Elsie, since in my telegram I directed you to ask for a young gentleman at this hotel, her very sex is not known in this place unless you divulge it. And——"

Here Kenelm was interrupted by a violent explosion of rage from the uncle. He stamped his feet; he almost foamed at the mouth; he doubled his fist, and shook it in Kenelm's face.

"Sir, you are mocking me: John Bovill is not a man to be jeered in this way. You *shall* marry the girl. I'll not have

her thrust back upon me to be the plague of my life with her whims and tantrums. You have taken her, and you shall keep her, or I'll break every bone in your skin."

"Break them," said Kenelm, resignedly, but at the same time falling back into a formidable attitude of defence, which cooled the pugnacity of his accuser. Mr. Bovill sank into his chair, and wiped his forehead. Kenelm craftily pursued the advantage he had gained, and in mild accents proceeded to reason—

"When you recover your habitual serenity of humour, Mr. Bovill, you will see how much your very excusable desire to secure your niece's happiness, and, I may add, to reward what you allow to have been forbearing and well-bred conduct on my part, has hurried you into an error of judgment. You know nothing of me. I may be, for what you know, an impostor or swindler; I may have every bad quality, and yet you are to be contented with my assurance, or rather your own assumption, that I am born a gentleman, in order to give me your niece and her 20,000*l*. This is temporary insanity on your part. Allow me to leave you to recover from your excitement."

"Stop, sir," said Mr. Bovill, in a changed and sullen tone; "I am not quite the madman you think me. But I dare say I have been too hasty and too rough. Nevertheless the facts are as I have stated them, and I do not see how, as a man of honour, you can get off marrying my niece. The mistake you made in running away with her was, no doubt, innocent on your part; but still there it is; and supposing the case came before a jury, it would be an ugly one for you and your family. Marriage alone could mend it. Come, come, I own I was too business-like in rushing to the point at once, and I no longer say, 'Marry my niece off-hand.' You have only seen her disguised and in a false position. Pay me a visit at Oakdale—stay with me a month—and if, at the end of that time you do not like her well enough to propose, I'll let you off and say no more about it."

While Mr. Bovill thus spoke, and Kenelm listened, neither saw that the door had been noiselessly opened and that Elsie

stood at the threshold. Now, before Kenelm could reply, she advanced into the middle of the room, and, her small figure drawn up to its fullest height, her cheeks glowing, her lips quivering, exclaimed—

“Uncle, for shame!” Then addressing Kenelm in a sharp tone of anguish, “Oh, do not believe I knew anything of this!” she covered her face with both hands, and stood mute.

All of chivalry that Kenelm had received with his baptismal appellation was aroused. He sprang up, and, bending his knee as he drew one of her hands into his own, he said—

“I am as convinced that your uncle’s words are abhorrent to you as I am that you are a pure-hearted and high-spirited woman, of whose friendship I shall be proud. We meet again.” Then releasing her hand, he addressed Mr. Bovill: “Sir, you are unworthy the charge of your niece. Had you not been so, she would have committed no imprudence. If she have any female relation, to that relation transfer your charge.”

“I have! I have!” cried Elsie; “my lost mother’s sister—let me go to her.”

“The woman who keeps a school!” said Mr. Bovill sneeringly.

“Why not?” asked Kenelm.

“She never would go there. I proposed it to her a year ago. The minx would not go into a school.”

“I will now, uncle.”

“Well, then, you shall at once; and I hope you’ll be put on bread and water. Fool! fool! you have spoilt your own game. Mr. Chillingly, now that Miss Elsie has turned her back on herself, I can convince you that I am not the madman you thought me. I was at the festive meeting held when you came of age—my brother is one of your father’s tenants. I did not recognise your face immediately in the excitement of our encounter and in your change of dress; but in walking home it struck me that I had seen it before, and I knew it at once when you entered the room to-day. It has been a tussle between us which should beat the other. You have beat me; and thanks

to that idiot! If she had not put her spoke into my wheel, she would have lived to be 'my lady.' Now good-day, sir."

"Mr. Bovill, you offered to shake hands: shake hands now, and promise me, with the good grace of one honourable combatant to another, that Miss Elsie shall go to her aunt the schoolmistress at once if she wishes it. Hark ye, my friend" (this in Mr. Bovill's ear): "A man can never manage a woman. Till a woman marries, a prudent man leaves her to women; when she does marry, she manages her husband, and there's an end of it."

Kenelm was gone.

"Oh, wise young man!" murmured the uncle. "Elsie, dear, how can you go to your aunt's while you are in that dress?"

Elsie started as from a trance, her eyes directed towards the doorway through which Kenelm had vanished. "This dress," she said, contemptuously—"this dress—is not that easily altered with shops in the town?"

"Gad!" muttered Mr. Bovill, "that youngster is a second Solomon; and if I can't manage Elsie, she'll manage a husband—whenever she gets one."

CHAPTER VIII.

"By the powers that guard innocence and celibacy," soliloquised Kenelm Chillingly, "but I have had a narrow escape! and had that amphibious creature been in girl's clothes instead of boy's, when she intervened like the deity of the ancient drama, I might have plunged my armorial Fishes into hot water. Though, indeed, it is hard to suppose that a young lady head-over-ears in love with Mr. Compton yesterday could have consigned her affections to me to-day. Still she looked as if she could, which proves either that one is never to trust a woman's heart, or never to trust a woman's looks. Decimus Roach is right. Man must never relax his flight from the women, if he strives to achieve an *Approach to the Angels*."

These reflections were made by Kenelm Chillingly as, having turned his back upon the town in which such temptations and trials had befallen him, he took his solitary way along a footpath that wound through meads and cornfields, and shortened by three miles the distance to a cathedral town at which he proposed to rest for the night.

He had travelled for some hours, and the sun was beginning to slope towards a range of blue hills in the west, when he came to the margin of a fresh rivulet, overshadowed by feathery willows, and the quivering leaves of silvery Italian poplars. Tempted by the quiet and cool of this pleasant spot, he flung himself down on the banks, drew from his knapsack some crusts of bread with which he had wisely provided himself, and, dipping them into the pure lymph as it rippled over its pebbly bed, enjoyed one of those luxurious repasts for which epicures would exchange their banquet in return for the appetite of youth. Then, reclining along the bank, and crushing the wild thyme that grows best and sweetest in wooded coverts, provided they be neighboured by water, no matter whether in pool or rill, he resigned himself to that intermediate state between thought and dream-land which we call "reverie." At a little distance he heard the low still sound of the mower's scythe, and the air came to his brow sweet with the fragrance of new-mown hay.

He was roused by a gentle tap on the shoulder, and turning lazily round, saw a good-humoured jovial face upon a pair of massive shoulders, and heard a hearty and winning voice say—

"Young man, if you are not too tired, will you lend a hand to get in my hay? We are very short of hands, and I am afraid we shall have rain pretty soon."

Kenelm rose and shook himself, gravely contemplated the stranger, and replied in his customary sententious fashion, "Man is born to help his fellow-man—especially to get in hay while the sun shines. I am at your service."

"That's a good fellow, and I'm greatly obliged to you. You see I had counted on a gang of roving haymakers, but they were bought up by another farmer. This way,"—and leading

on through a gap in the brushwood, he emerged, followed by Kenelm, into a large meadow, one-third of which was still under the scythe, the rest being occupied with persons of both sexes, tossing and spreading the cut grass. Among the latter, Kenelm, stripped to his shirt-sleeves, soon found himself tossing and spreading like the rest, with his usual melancholy resignation of mien and aspect. Though a little awkward at first in the use of his unfamiliar implements, his practice in all athletic accomplishments bestowed on him that invaluable quality which is termed "handiness," and he soon distinguished himself by the superior activity and neatness with which he performed his work. Something—it might be in his countenance or in the charm of his being a stranger—attracted the attention of the feminine section of haymakers, and one very pretty girl who was nearer to him than the rest, attempted to commence conversation.

"This is new to you," she said, smiling.

"Nothing is new to me," answered Kenelm, mournfully. "But allow me to observe, that to do things well you should only do one thing at a time. I am here to make hay, and not conversation."

"My!" said the girl, in amazed ejaculation, and turned off with a toss of her pretty head.

"I wonder if that jade has got an uncle," thought Kenelm.

The farmer, who took his share of work with the men, halting now and then to look round, noticed Kenelm's vigorous application with much approval, and at the close of the day's work shook him heartily by the hand, leaving a two-shilling piece in his palm. The heir of the Chillinglys gazed on that honorarium, and turned it over with the finger and thumb of the left hand.

"Ben't it eno'?" said the farmer, nettled.

"Pardon me," answered Kenelm. "But, to tell you the truth, it is the first money I ever earned by my own bodily labour; and I regard it with equal curiosity and respect. But, if it would not offend you, I would rather that, instead of the money, you had offered me some supper; for I have tasted nothing but bread and water since the morning."

"You shall have the money and supper both, my lad," said the farmer, cheerily. "And if you will stay and help till I have got in the hay, I dare say my good woman can find you a better bed than you'll get in the village inn—if, indeed, you can get one there at all."

"You are very kind. But before I accept your hospitality excuse one question—have you any nieces about you?"

"Nieces!" echoed the farmer, mechanically thrusting his hands into his breeches-pockets as if in search of something there—"nieces about me! what do you mean? Be that a newfangled word for coppers?"

"Not for coppers, though perhaps for brass. But I spoke without metaphor. I object to nieces upon abstract principle, confirmed by the test of experience."

The farmer stared, and thought his new friend not quite so sound in his mental as he evidently was in his physical conformation, but replied, with a laugh, "Make yourself easy, then. I have only one niece, and she is married to an iron-monger and lives in Exeter."

On entering the farmhouse, Kenelm's host conducted him straight into the kitchen, and cried out, in a hearty voice, to a comely middle-aged dame, who, with a stout girl, was intent on culinary operations, "Hulloa! old woman, I have brought you a guest who has well earned his supper, for he has done the work of two, and I have promised him a bed."

The farmer's wife turned sharply round. "He is heartily welcome to supper. As to a bed," she said, doubtfully, "I don't know." But here her eyes settled on Kenelm; and there was something in his aspect so unlike what she expected to see in an itinerant haymaker, that she involuntarily dropped a curtsy, and resumed, with a change of tone, "The gentleman shall have the guest-room; but it will take a little time to get ready—you know, John, all the furniture is covered up."

"Well, wife, there will be leisure eno' for that. He don't want to go to roost till he has supped."

"Certainly not," said Kenelm, sniffing a very agreeable odour.

"Where are the girls?" asked the farmer.

"They have been in these five minutes, and gone up stairs to tidy themselves."

"What girls?" faltered Kenelm, retreating towards the door. "I thought you said you had no nieces."

"But I did not say I had no daughters. Why, you are not afraid of them, are you?"

"Sir," replied Kenelm, with a polite and politic evasion of that question, "if your daughters are like their mother, you can't say that they are not dangerous."

"Come," cried the farmer, looking very much pleased, while his dame smiled and blushed—"come, that's as nicely said as if you were canvassing the county. 'Tis not among haymakers that you learned manners, I guess; and perhaps I have been making too free with my betters."

"What!" quoth the courteous Kenelm, "do you mean to imply that you were too free with your shillings? Apologise for that, if you like, but I don't think you'll get back the shillings. I have not seen so much of this life as you have, but, according to my experience, when a man once parts with his money, whether to his betters or his worsers, the chances are that he'll never see it again."

At this aphorism the farmer laughed ready to kill himself, his wife chuckled, and even the maid-of-all-work grinned. Kenelm, preserving his unalterable gravity, said to himself—

"Wit consists in the epigrammatic expression of a commonplace truth, and the dullest remark on the worth of money is almost as sure of successful appreciation as the dullest remark on the worthlessness of women. Certainly I am a wit without knowing it."

Here the farmer touched him on the shoulder—touched it, did not slap it, as he would have done ten minutes before—and said—

"We must not disturb the Missis or we shall get no supper. I'll just go and give a look into the cow-sheds. Do you know much about cows?"

"Yes, cows produce cream and butter. The best cows are those which produce at the least cost the best cream and butter. But how the best cream and butter can be produced

at a price which will place them free of expense on a poor man's breakfast-table, is a question to be settled by a Reformed Parliament and a Liberal Administration. In the meanwhile let us not delay the supper."

The farmer and his guest quitted the kitchen and entered the farmyard.

"You are quite a stranger in these parts?"

"Quite."

"You don't even know my name?"

"No, except that I heard your wife call you John."

"My name is John Saunderson."

"Ah! you come from the north, then? That's why you are so sensible and shrewd. Names that end in 'son' are chiefly borne by the descendants of the Danes, to whom King Alfred, Heaven bless him! peacefully assigned no less than sixteen English counties. And when a Dane was called somebody's son, it is a sign that he was the son of a somebody."

"By gosh! I never heard that before."

"If I thought you had I should not have said it."

"Now I have told you my name, what is yours?"

"A wise man asks questions and a fool answers them. Suppose for a moment that I am not a fool."

Farmer Saunderson scratched his head, and looked more puzzled than became the descendant of a Dane settled by King Alfred in the north of England.

"Dash it," said he at last, "but I think you are Yorkshire too."

"Man, who is the most conceited of all animals, says that he alone has the prerogative of thought, and condemns the other animals to the meaner mechanical operation which he calls instinct. But as instincts are unerring and thoughts generally go wrong, man has not much to boast of according to his own definition. When you say you think, and take it for granted, that I am Yorkshire, you err. I am not Yorkshire. Confining yourself to instinct, can you divine when we shall sup? The cows you are about to visit divine to a moment when they shall be fed."

Said the farmer, recovering his sense of superiority to the

guest whom he obliged with a supper, "In ten minutes." Then, after a pause, and in a tone of deprecation, as if he feared he might be thought fine, he continued—"We don't sup in the kitchen. My father did, and so did I till I married; but my Bess, though she's as good a farmer's wife as ever wore shoe-leather, was a tradesman's daughter, and had been brought up different. You see she was not without a good bit of money; but even if she had been, I should not have liked her folks to say I had lowered her—so we sup in the parlour.

Quoth Kenelm, "The first consideration is to sup at all. Supper conceded, every man is more likely to get on in life who would rather sup in his parlour than his kitchen. Meanwhile, I see a pump; while you go to the cows I will stay here and wash my hands of them."

"Hold! you seem a sharp fellow, and certainly no fool. I have a son, a good smart chap, but stuck up; crows it over us all; thinks no small beer of himself. You'd do me a service, and him too, if you'd let him down a peg or two."

Kenelm, who was now hard at work at the pump-handle, only replied by a gracious nod. But as he seldom lost an opportunity for reflection, he said to himself, while he laved his face in the stream from the spout, "One can't wonder why every small man thinks it so pleasant to let down a big one, when a father asks a stranger to let down his own son for even fancying that he is not small beer. It is upon that principle in human nature that criticism wisely relinquishes its pretensions as an analytical science, and becomes a lucrative profession. It relies on the pleasure its readers find in letting a man down."

CHAPTER IX.

IT was a pretty, quaint farmhouse, such as might well go with two or three hundred acres of tolerably good land, tolerably well farmed by an active old-fashioned tenant, who, though he did not use mowing-machines nor steam-ploughs, nor dabble in chemical experiments, still brought an adequate capital to his land, and made the capital yield a very fair return of interest. The supper was laid out in a good-sized though low-pitched parlour with a glazed door, now wide open, as were all the latticed windows, looking into a small garden, rich in those straggling old English flowers which are nowadays banished from gardens more pretentious and infinitely less fragrant. At one corner was an arbour covered with honeysuckle, and, opposite to it, a row of beehives. The room itself had an air of comfort, and that sort of elegance which indicates the presiding genius of feminine taste. There were shelves suspended to the wall by blue ribbons, and filled with small books neatly bound; there were flower-pots in all the window-sills; there was a small cottage piano; the walls were graced partly with engraved portraits of county magnates and prize oxen; partly with samplers in worsted-work, comprising verses of moral character and the names and birthdays of the farmer's grandmother, mother, wife, and daughters. Over the chimney-piece was a small mirror, and above that the trophy of a fox's brush; while niched into an angle in the room was a glazed cupboard, rich with specimens of old china, Indian and English.

The party consisted of the farmer, his wife, three buxom daughters, and a pale-faced slender lad of about twenty, the only son, who did not take willingly to farming: he had been educated at a superior grammar school, and had high notions about the March of Intellect and the Progress of the Age.

Kenelm, though among the gravest of mortals, was one of the least shy. In fact shyness is the usual symptom of a keen *amour propre*; and of that quality the youthful Chillingly scarcely possessed more than did the three Fishes of his here-

ditary scutcheon. He felt himself perfectly at home with his entertainers; taking care, however, that his attentions were so equally divided between the three daughters as to prevent all suspicion of a particular preference. "There is safety in numbers," thought he, "especially in odd numbers. The three Graces never married, neither did the nine Muses."

"I presume, young ladies, that you are fond of music," said Kenelm, glancing at the piano.

"Yes, I love it dearly," said the eldest girl, speaking for the others.

Quoth the farmer as he heaped the stranger's plate with boiled beef and carrots, "Things are not what they were when I was a boy; then it was only great tenant-farmers who had their girls taught the piano, and sent their boys to a good school. Now we small folks are for helping our children a step or two higher than our own place on the ladder."

"The schoolmaster is abroad," said the son, with the emphasis of a sage adding an original aphorism to the stores of philosophy.

"There is, no doubt, a greater equality of culture than there was in the last generation," said Kenelm. "People of all ranks utter the same commonplace ideas in very much the same arrangements of syntax. And in proportion as the democracy of intelligence extends—a friend of mine, who is a doctor, tells me that complaints formerly reserved to what is called aristocracy (though what that word means in plain English I don't know) are equally shared by the commonalty—*tic-douloureux* and other neuralgic maladies abound. And the human race, in England at least, is becoming more slight and delicate. There is a fable of a man who, when he became exceedingly old, was turned into a grasshopper. England is very old, and is evidently approaching the grasshopper state of development. Perhaps we don't eat as much beef as our forefathers did. May I ask you for another slice?"

Kenelm's remarks were somewhat over the heads of his audience. But the son, taking them as a slur upon the enlightened spirit of the age, coloured up and said, with a knitted brow, "I hope, sir, that you are not an enemy to progress."

"That depends: for instance, I prefer staying here, where I am well off, to going farther and faring worse."

"Well said!" cried the farmer.

Not deigning to notice that interruption, the son took up Kenelm's reply with a sneer, "I suppose you mean that it is to fare worse, if you march with the time."

"I am afraid we have no option but to march with the time; but when we reach that stage when to march any farther is to march into old age, we should not be sorry if time would be kind enough to stand still; and all good doctors concur in advising us to do nothing to hurry him."

"There is no sign of old age in this country, sir; and thank Heaven we are not standing still!"

"Grasshoppers never do; they are always hopping and jumping, and making what they think 'progress,' till (unless they hop into the water and are swallowed up prematurely by a carp or a frog) they die of the exhaustion which hops and jumps unremitting naturally produce. May I ask you, Mrs. Saunderson, for some of that rice-pudding?"

The farmer, who, though he did not quite comprehend Kenelm's metaphorical mode of arguing, saw delightedly that his wise son looked more posed than himself, cried with great glee, "Bob, my boy,—Bob, our visitor is a little too much for you!"

"Oh no," said Kenelm modestly. "But I honestly think Mr. Bob would be a wiser man, and a weightier man, and more removed from the grasshopper state, if he would think less and eat more pudding."

When the supper was over the farmer offered Kenelm a clay pipe filled with shag, which that adventurer accepted with his habitual resignation to the ills of life; and the whole party, excepting Mrs. Saunderson, strolled into the garden. Kenelm and Mr. Saunderson seated themselves in the honeysuckle arbour: the girls and the advocate of progress stood without among the garden flowers. It was a still and lovely night, the moon at her full. The farmer, seated facing his hay-fields, smoked on placidly. Kenelm, at the third whiff, laid aside his pipe, and glanced furtively at the three Graces.

They formed a pretty group, all clustered together near the silenced beehives, the two younger seated on the grass strip that bordered the flower-beds, their arms over each other's shoulders, the elder one standing behind them, with the moonlight shining soft on her auburn hair.

Young Saunderson walked restlessly by himself to and fro the path of gravel.

"It is a strange thing," ruminated Kenelm, "that girls are not unpleasant to look at if you take them collectively—two or three bound up together; but if you detach any one of them from the bunch, the odds are that she is as plain as a pikestaff. I wonder whether that bucolical grasshopper, who is so enamoured of the hop and jump that he calls 'progress,' classes the society of the Mormons among the evidences of civilised advancement? There is a good deal to be said in favour of taking a whole lot of wives as one may buy a whole lot of cheap razors. For it is not impossible that out of a dozen a good one may be found. And then, too, a whole nosegay of variegated blooms, with a faded leaf here and there, must be more agreeable to the eye than the same monotonous solitary lady's smock. But I fear these reflections are naughty; let us change them. Farmer," he said aloud, "I suppose your handsome daughters are too fine to assist you much. I did not see them among the haymakers."

"Oh, they were there, but by themselves, in the back part of the field. I did not want them to mix with all the girls, many of whom are strangers from other places. I don't know anything against them; but as I don't know anything for them, I thought it as well to keep my lasses apart."

"But I should have supposed it wiser to keep your son apart from them. I saw him in the thick of those nymphs."

"Well," said the farmer, musingly, and withdrawing his pipe from his lips, "I don't think lasses not quite well brought up, poor things! do as much harm to the lads as they can do to proper-behaved lasses—leastways my wife does not think so. 'Keep good girls from bad girls,' says she, 'and good girls will never go wrong.' And you will find there is something in that when you have girls of your own to take care of."

"Without waiting for that time—which I trust may never occur—I can recognise the wisdom of your excellent wife's observation. My own opinion is, that a woman can more easily do mischief to her own sex than to ours,—since, of course, she cannot exist without doing mischief to somebody or other."

"And good, too," said the jovial farmer, thumping his fist on the table. "What should we be without women?"

"Very much better, I take it, sir. Adam was as good as gold, and never had a qualm of conscience or stomach till Eve seduced him into eating raw apples."

"Young man, thou'st been crossed in love. I see it now. That's why thou look'st so sorrowful."

"Sorrowful! Did you ever know a man crossed in love who looked less sorrowful when he came across a pudding?"

"Hey! but thou canst ply a good knife and fork—that I will say for thee." Here the farmer turned round, and gazed on Kenelm with deliberate scrutiny. That scrutiny accomplished, his voice took a somewhat more respectful tone, as he resumed, "Do you know that you puzzle me somewhat?"

"Very likely. I am sure that I puzzle myself. Say on."

"Looking at your dress and—and——"

"The two shillings you gave me? Yes——"

"I took you for the son of some small farmer like myself. But now I judge from your talk that you are a college chap—anyhow, a gentleman. Ben't it so?"

"My dear Mr. Saunderson, I set out on my travels, which is not long ago, with a strong dislike to telling lies. But I doubt if a man can get long through this world without finding that the faculty of lying was bestowed on him by nature as a necessary means of self-preservation. If you are going to ask me any questions about myself, I am sure that I shall tell you lies. Perhaps, therefore, it may be best for both if I decline the bed you proffered me, and take my night's rest under a hedge."

"Pooh! I don't want to know more of a man's affairs than he thinks fit to tell me. Stay and finish the haymaking. And I say, lad, I'm glad you don't seem to care for the girls; for I saw a very pretty one trying to flirt with you—and if you don't mind she'll bring you into trouble."

"How? Does she want to run away from her uncle?"

"Uncle! Bless you, she don't live with him! She lives with her father; and I never knew that she wants to run away. In fact, Jessie Wiles—that's her name—is, I believe, a very good girl, and everybody likes her—perhaps a little too much; but then she knows she's a beauty, and does not object to admiration."

"No woman ever does, whether she's a beauty or not. But I don't yet understand why Jessie Wiles should bring me into trouble."

"Because there is a big hulking fellow who has gone half out of his wits for her; and when he fancies he sees any other chap too sweet on her he thrashes him into a jelly. So, youngster, you just keep your skin out of that trap."

"Hem! And what does the girl say to those proofs of affection? Does she like the man the better for thrashing other admirers into jelly?"

"Poor child! No; she hates the very sight of him. But he swears she shall marry nobody else if he hangs for it. And to tell you the truth, I suspect that if Jessie does seem to trifle with others a little too lightly, it is to draw away this bully's suspicion from the only man I think she does care for—a poor sickly young fellow who was crippled by an accident, and whom Tom Bowles could brain with his little finger."

"This is really interesting," cried Kenelm, showing something like excitement. "I should like to know this terrible suitor."

"That's easy eno'," said the farmer, drily. "You have only to take a stroll with Jessie Wiles after sunset, and you'll know more of Tom Bowles than you are likely to forget in a month."

"Thank you very much for your information," said Kenelm, in a soft tone, grateful but pensive. "I hope to profit by it."

"Do. I should be sorry if any harm came to thee; and Tom Bowles in one of his furies is as bad to cross as a mad bull. So now, as we must be up early, I'll just take a look round the stables, and then off to bed; and I advise you to do the same."

"Thank you for the hint. I see the young ladies have already gone in. Good-night."

Passing through the garden, Kenelm encountered the junior Saunderson.

"I fear," said the Votary of Progress, "that you have found the governor awful slow. What have you been talking about?"

"Girls," said Kenelm, "a subject always awful, but not necessarily slow."

"Girls—the governor been talking about girls? You joke."

"I wish I did joke, but that is a thing I could never do since I came upon earth. Even in the cradle, I felt that life was a very serious matter, and did not allow of jokes. I remember too well my first dose of castor-oil. You too, Mr. Bob, have doubtless imbibed that initiatory preparation to the sweets of existence. The corners of your mouth have not recovered from the downward curves into which it so rigidly dragged them. Like myself, you are of grave temperament, and not easily moved to jocularity—nay, an enthusiast for Progress is of necessity a man eminently dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. And chronic dissatisfaction resents the momentary relief of a joke."

"Give off chaffing, if you please," said Bob, lowering the didascular intonations of his voice, "and just tell me plainly, did not my father say anything particular about me?"

"Not a word—the only person of the male sex of whom he said anything particular was Tom Bowles."

"What, fighting Tom! the terror of the whole neighbourhood! Ah, I guess the old gentleman is afraid lest Tom may fall foul upon me. But Jessie Wiles is not worth a quarrel with that brute. It is a crying shame in the Government——"

"What! has the Government failed to appreciate the heroism of Tom Bowles, or rather to restrain the excesses of its ardour?"

"Stuff! it is a shame in the Government not to have compelled his father to put him to school. If education were universal——"

"You think there would be no brutes in particular. It may be so, but education is universal in China. And so is the bastinado. I thought, however, that you said the schoolmaster was abroad, and that the age of enlightenment was in full progress."

"Yes, in the towns, but not in these obsolete rural districts; and that brings me to the point. I feel lost—thrown away here. I have something in me, sir, and it can only come out by collision with equal minds. So do me a favour, will you?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

"Give the governor a hint that he can't expect me after the education I have had, to follow the plough and fatten pigs; and that Manchester is the place for ME."

"Why Manchester?"

"Because I have a relation in business there who will give me a clerkship if the governor will consent. And Manchester rules England."

"Mr. Bob Saunderson, I will do my best to promote your wishes. This is a land of liberty, and every man should choose his own walk in it, so that, at the last, if he goes to the dogs, he goes to them without that disturbance of temper which is naturally occasioned by the sense of being driven to their jaws by another man against his own will. He has then no one to blame but himself. And that, Mr. Bob, is a great comfort. When, having got into a scrape, we blame others, we unconsciously become unjust, spiteful, uncharitable, malignant, perhaps revengeful. We indulge in feelings which tend to demoralise the whole character. But when we only blame ourselves, we become modest and penitent. We make allowances for others. And indeed, self-blame is a salutary exercise of conscience, which a really good man performs every day of his life. And now, will you show me the room in which I am to sleep, and forget for a few hours that I am alive at all—the best thing that can happen to us in this world, my dear Mr. Bob! There's never much amiss with our days, so long as we can forget about them the moment we lay our heads on the pillow."

The two young men entered the house amicably, arm in arm. The girls had already retired, but Mrs. Saunderson was still up to conduct her visitor to the guest's chamber—a pretty room which had been furnished twenty-two years ago on the occasion of the farmer's marriage, at the expense of Mrs. Saunderson's mother, for her own occupation when she paid them a visit.

And with its dimity curtains and trellised paper it still looked as fresh and new as if decorated and furnished yesterday.

Left alone, Kenelm undressed, and before he got into bed, bared his right arm, and doubling it, gravely contemplated its muscular development, passing his left hand over that prominence in the upper part which is vulgarly called the ball. Satisfied apparently with the size and the firmness of that pugilistic protuberance, he gently sighed forth, "I fear I shall have to lick Thomas Bowles." In five minutes more he was asleep.

CHAPTER X.

THE next day the hay-mowing was completed, and a large portion of the hay already made carted away to be stacked. Kenelm acquitted himself with a credit not less praiseworthy than had previously won Mr. Saunderson's approbation. But instead of rejecting as before the acquaintance of Miss Jessie Wiles, he contrived towards noon to place himself near to that dangerous beauty, and commenced conversation. "I am afraid I was rather rude to you yesterday, and I want to beg pardon."

"Oh," answered the girl, in that simple intelligible English which is more frequent among our village folks nowadays than many popular novelists would lead us into supposing—"oh, I ought to ask pardon for taking a liberty in speaking to you. But I thought you'd feel strange, and I intended it kindly."

"I'm sure you did," returned Kenelm, chivalrously raking her portion of hay as well as his own, while he spoke. "And I want to be good friends with you. It is very near the time when we shall leave off for dinner, and Mrs. Saunderson has filled my pockets with some excellent beef-sandwiches, which I shall be happy to share with you, if you do not object to dine with me here, instead of going home for your dinner."

The girl hesitated, and then shook her head in dissent from the proposition.

"Are you afraid that your neighbours will think it wrong?"

Jessie curled up her lips with a pretty scorn, and said, "I don't much care what other folks say, but isn't it wrong?"

"Not in the least. Let me make your mind easy. I am here but for a day or two; we are not likely ever to meet again; but, before I go, I should be glad if I could do you some little service." As he spoke he had paused from his work, and, leaning on his rake, fixed his eyes, for the first time attentively, on the fair haymaker.

Yes, she was decidedly pretty—pretty to a rare degree—luxuriant brown hair neatly tied up, under a straw hat doubtless of her own plaiting; for, as a general rule, nothing more educates the village maid for the destinies of flirt, than the accomplishment of straw-plaiting. She had large, soft blue eyes, delicate small features, and a complexion more clear in its healthful bloom than rural beauties generally retain against the influences of wind and sun. She smiled and slightly coloured as he gazed on her, and, lifting her eyes, gave him one gentle, trustful glance, which might have bewitched a philosopher and deceived a *roué*. And yet Kenelm, by that intuitive knowledge of character which is often truthfulest where it is least disturbed by the doubts and cavils of acquired knowledge, felt at once that in that girl's mind coquetry, perhaps unconscious, was conjoined with an innocence of anything worse than coquetry as complete as a child's. He bowed his head, in withdrawing his gaze, and took her into his heart as tenderly as if she had been a child appealing to it for protection.

"Certainly," he said inly — "certainly I must lick Tom Bowles; yet stay, perhaps after all she likes him."

"But," he continued aloud, "you do not see how I can be of any service to you. Before I explain, let me ask which of the men in the field is Tom Bowles?"

"Tom Bowles?" exclaimed Jessie, in a tone of surprise and alarm, and turning pale as she looked hastily round; "you frightened me, sir; but he is not here; he does not work in the fields. But how came you to hear of Tom Bowles?"

"Dine with me and I'll tell you. Look, there is a quiet place in yon corner under the thorn-trees by that piece of

water. See, they are leaving off work : I will go for a can of beer, and then, pray, let me join you there."

Jessie paused for a moment as if doubtful still ; then again glancing at Kenelm, and assured by the grave kindness of his countenance, uttered a scarce audible assent, and moved away towards the thorn-trees.

As the sun now stood perpendicularly over their heads, and the hand of the clock in the village church tower, soaring over the hedgerows, reached the first hour after noon, all work ceased in a sudden silence ; some of the girls went back to their homes ; those who stayed grouped together, apart from the men, who took their way to the shadows of a large oak-tree in the hedgerow, where beer kegs and cans awaited them.

CHAPTER XI.

"AND now," said Kenelm, as the two young persons, having finished their simple repast, sat under the thorn-trees and by the side of the water, fringed at that part with tall reeds through which the light summer breeze stirred with a pleasant murmur,—"now I will talk to you about Tom Bowles. Is it true that you don't like that brave young fellow?—I say young, as I take his youth for granted."

"Like him ! I hate the sight of him."

"Did you always hate the sight of him ? You must surely at one time have allowed him to think that you did not ?"

The girl winced, and made no answer, but plucked a daffodil from the soil, and tore it ruthlessly to pieces.

"I am afraid you like to serve your admirers as you do that ill-fated flower," said Kenelm, with some severity of tone. "But concealed in the flower you may sometimes find the sting of a bee. I see by your countenance that you did not tell Tom Bowles that you hated him till it was too late to prevent his losing his wits for you."

"No ; I wasn't so bad as that," said Jessie, looking, never-

theless, rather ashamed of herself; "but I was silly and giddy-like, I own; and, when he first took notice of me, I was pleased, without thinking much of it, because, you see, Mr. Bowles (emphasis on *Mr.*) is higher up than a poor girl like me. He is a tradesman, and I am only a shepherd's daughter—though, indeed, father is more like Mr. Saunderson's foreman than a mere shepherd. But I never thought anything serious of it, and did not suppose he did—that is, at first."

"So Tom Bowles is a tradesman. What trade?"

"A farrier, sir."

"And, I am told, a very fine young man."

"I don't know as to that: he is very big."

"And what made you hate him?"

"The first thing that made me hate him was, that he insulted father, who is a very quiet, timid man, and threatened I don't know what if father did not make me keep company with him. Make me indeed! But Mr. Bowles is a dangerous, bad-hearted, violent man, and—don't laugh at me, sir—but I dreamed one night he was murdering me. And I think he will too, if he stays here; and so does his poor mother, who is a very nice woman, and wants him to go away; but he'll not."

"Jessie," said Kenelm, softly, "I said I wanted to make friends with you. Do you think you can make a friend of me? I can never be more than friend. But I should like to be that. Can you trust me as one?"

"Yes," answered the girl firmly, and, as she lifted her eyes to him, their look was pure from all vestige of coquetry—guileless, frank, grateful.

"Is there not another young man who courts you more civilly than Tom Bowles does, and whom you really could find it in your heart to like?"

Jessie looked round for another daffodil, and not finding one, contented herself with a bluebell, which she did not tear to pieces but caressed with a tender hand. Kenelm bent his eyes down on her charming face with something in their gaze rarely seen there—something of that unreasoning, inexpressible human fondness, for which philosophers of his school have no excuse. Had ordinary mortals, like you or myself, for instance, peered

through the leaves of the thorn-trees, we should have sighed or frowned, according to our several temperaments; but we should all have said, whether spitefully or envyingly, "Happy young lovers!" and should all have blundered lamentably in so saying.

Still, there is no denying the fact that a pretty face has a very unfair advantage over a plain one. And, much to the discredit of Kenelm's philanthropy, it may be reasonably doubted whether, had Jessie Wiles been endowed by nature with a snub nose and a squint, Kenelm would have volunteered his friendly services, or meditated battle with Tom Bowles on her behalf.

But there was no touch of envy or jealousy in the tone with which he said—

"I see there is some one you would like well enough to marry, and that you make a great difference in the way you treat a daffodil and a blue-bell. Who and what is the young man whom the blue-bell represents? Come, confide."

"We were much brought up together," said Jessie, still looking down, and still smoothing the leaves of the blue-bell. "His mother lived in the next cottage; and my mother was very fond of him, and so was father too; and, before I was ten years old, they used to laugh when poor Will called me his little wife." Here the tears which had started to Jessie's eyes began to fall over the flower. "But now father would not hear of it; and it can't be. And I've tried to care for some one else, and I can't, and that's the truth."

"But why? Has he turned out ill?—taken to poaching or drink?"

"No—no—no,—he's as steady and good a lad as ever lived. But—but——"

"Yes; but——"

"He is a cripple now—and I love him all the better for it." Here Jessie fairly sobbed.

Kenelm was greatly moved, and prudently held his peace till she had a little recovered herself; then, in answer to his gentle questionings, he learned that Will Somers—till then a healthy and strong lad—had fallen from the height of a

scaffolding, at the age of sixteen, and been so seriously injured that he was moved at once to the hospital. When he came out of it—what with the fall, and what with the long illness which had followed the effects of the accident—he was not only crippled for life; but of health so delicate and weakly that he was no longer fit for outdoor labour and the hard life of a peasant. He was an only son of a widowed mother, and his sole mode of assisting her was a very precarious one. He had taught himself basket-making; and though, Jessie said, his work was very ingenious and clever, still there were but few customers for it in that neighbourhood. And, alas! even if Jessie's father would consent to give his daughter to the poor cripple, how could the poor cripple earn enough to maintain a wife?

"And," said Jessie, "still I was happy, walking out with him on Sunday evenings, or going to sit with him and his mother—for we are both young and can wait. But I daren't do it any more now—for Tom Bowles has sworn that if I do he will beat him before my eyes; and Will has a high spirit, and I should break my heart if any harm happened to him on my account."

"As for Mr. Bowles, we'll not think of him at present. But if Will could maintain himself and you, your father would not object, nor you either, to a marriage with the poor cripple?"

"Father would not; and as for me, if it weren't for disobeying father, I'd marry him to-morrow. I can work."

"They are going back to the hay now; but after that task is over, let me walk home with you, and show me Will's cottage and Mr. Bowles's shop or forge."

"But you'll not say anything to Mr. Bowles. He wouldn't mind your being a gentleman, as I now see you are, sir; and he's dangerous—oh, so dangerous!—and so strong."

"Never fear," answered Kenelm, with the nearest approach to a laugh he had ever made since childhood; "but when we are relieved, wait for me a few minutes at yon gate."

CHAPTER XII.

KENELM spoke no more to his new friend in the hayfields; but when the day's work was over he looked round for the farmer to make an excuse for not immediately joining the family supper. However, he did not see either Mr. Saunderson or his son. Both were busied in the stackyard. Well pleased to escape excuse and the questions it might provoke, Kenelm therefore put on the coat he had laid aside and joined Jessie, who had waited for him at the gate. They entered the lane side by side, following the stream of villagers who were slowly wending their homeward way. It was a primitive English village, not adorned on the one hand with fancy or model cottages, nor on the other hand indicating penury and squalor. The church rose before them grey and Gothic, backed by the red clouds in which the sun had set, and bordered by the glebe-land of the half-seen parsonage. Then came the village green, with a pretty schoolhouse; and to this succeeded a long street of scattered whitewashed cottages, in the midst of their own little gardens.

As they walked the moon rose in full splendour, silvering the road before them.

"Who is the squire here?" asked Kenelm. "I should guess him to be a good sort of man and well off."

"Yes, Squire Travers; he is a great gentleman, and they say very rich. But his place is a good way from this village. You can see it if you stay, for he gives a harvest-home supper on Saturday, and Mr. Saunderson and all his tenants are going. It is a beautiful park, and Miss Travers is a sight to look at. Oh, she is lovely!" continued Jessie, with an unaffected burst of admiration; for women are more sensible of the charm of each other's beauty than men give them credit for.

"As pretty as yourself?"

"Oh, pretty is not the word. She is a thousand times handsomer!"

"Humph!" said Kenelm, incredulously.

There was a pause, broken by a quick sigh from Jessie.

"What are you sighing for?—tell me."

"I was thinking that a very little can make folks happy, but that somehow or other that very little is as hard to get as if one set one's heart on a great deal."

"That's very wisely said. Everybody covets a little something for which, perhaps, nobody else would give a straw. But what's the very little thing for which you are sighing?"

"Mrs. Bawtrey wants to sell that shop of hers. She is getting old, and has had fits; and she can get nobody to buy; and if Will had that shop and I could keep it—but 'tis no use thinking of that."

"What shop do you mean?"

"There!"

"Where? I see no shop."

"But it is *the* shop of the village—the only one, where the post-office is."

"Ah! I see something at the windows like a red cloak. What do they sell?"

"Everything—tea and sugar, and candles, and shawls, and gowns, and cloaks, and mouse-traps and letter-paper; and Mrs. Bawtrey buys poor Will's baskets, and sells them for a good deal more than she pays."

"It seems a nice cottage, with a field and orchard at the back."

"Yes. Mrs. Bawtrey pays 8*l.* a-year for it; but the shop can well afford it."

Kenelm made no reply. They both walked on in silence, and had now reached the centre of the village street when Jessie, looking up, uttered an abrupt exclamation, gave an affrighted start, and then came to a dead stop.

Kenelm's eye followed the direction of hers, and saw, a few yards distant, at the other side of the way, a small red brick house, with thatched sheds adjoining it, the whole standing in a wide yard, over the gate of which leaned a man smoking a small cutty-pipe. "It is Tom Bowles," whispered Jessie, and instinctively she twined her arm into Kenelm's—then, as if on second thoughts, withdrew it, and said, still in a whisper, "Go back now, sir—do."

"Not I. It is Tom Bowles whom I want to know. Hush!"

For here Tom Bowles had thrown down his pipe and was coming slowly across the road towards them.

Kenelm eyed him with attention. A singularly powerful man, not so tall as Kenelm by some inches, but still above the middle height, herculean shoulders and chest, the lower limbs not in equal proportion—a sort of slouching, shambling gait. As he advanced the moonlight fell on his face, it was a handsome one. He wore no hat and his hair, of a light brown, curled close. His face was fresh-coloured, with aquiline features; his age apparently about six or seven-and-twenty. Coming nearer and nearer, whatever favourable impression the first glance at his physiognomy might have made on Kenelm was dispelled, for the expression of his face changed and became fierce and lowering.

Kenelm was still walking on, Jessie by his side, when Bowles rudely thrust himself between them, and seizing the girl's arm with one hand, he turned his face full on Kenelm, with a menacing wave of the other hand, and said in a deep burly voice—

“Who be you?”

“Let go that young woman before I tell you.”

“If you weren't a stranger,” answered Bowles, seeming as if he tried to suppress a rising fit of wrath, “you'd be in the kennel for those words. But I s'pose you don't know that I'm Tom Bowles, and I don't choose the girl as I'm after to keep company with any other man. So you be off.”

“And I don't choose any other man to lay violent hands on any girl walking by my side without telling him that he's a brute; and that I only wait till he has both his hands at liberty to let him know that he has not a poor cripple to deal with.”

Tom Bowles could scarcely believe his ears. Amaze swallowed up for the moment every other sentiment. Mechanically he loosened his hold of Jessie, who fled off like a bird released. But evidently she thought of her new friend's danger more than her own escape; for instead of sheltering herself in her father's cottage, she ran towards a group of labourers who, near at hand, had stopped loitering before the public-house and returned with those allies towards the spot in which she had left the two men. She was very popular with the villagers, who, strong in the sense of numbers, overcame their awe of Tom Bowles, and arrived

at the place half running, half striding, in time, they hoped, to interpose between his terrible arm and the bones of the unoffending stranger.

Meanwhile Bowles, having recovered his first astonishment, and scarcely noticing Jessie's escape, still left his right arm extended towards the place she had vacated, and with a quick back-stroke of the left levelled at Kenelm's face, growled contemptuously, "Thou'lt find one hand enough for thee."

But quick as was his aim, Kenelm caught the lifted arm just above the elbow, causing the blow to waste itself on air, and with a simultaneous advance of his right knee and foot dexterously tripped up his bulky antagonist, and laid him sprawling on his back. The movement was so sudden, and the stun it occasioned so utter, morally as well as physically, that a minute or more elapsed before Tom Bowles picked himself up. And he then stood another minute glowering at his antagonist, with a vague sentiment of awe almost like a superstitious panic. For it is noticeable that, however fierce and fearless a man or even a wild beast may be, yet if either has hitherto been only familiar with victory and triumph, never yet having met with a foe that could cope with its force, the first effect of a defeat, especially from a despised adversary, unhinges and half paralyses the whole nervous system. But as fighting Tom gradually recovered to the consciousness of his own strength, and the recollection that it had been only foiled by the skilful trick of a wrestler, and not the hand-to-hand might of a pugilist, the panic vanished, and Tom Bowles was himself again. "Oh, that's your sort, is it? We don't fight with our heels hereabouts, like Cornishers and donkeys; we fight with our fists, youngster; and since you *will* have a bout at that, why, you must."

"Providence," answered Kenelm, solemnly, "sent me to this village for the express purpose of licking Tom Bowles. It is a signal mercy vouchsafed to yourself, as you will one day acknowledge."

Again a thrill of awe, something like that which the demagogue in Aristophanes might have felt when braved by the sausage-maker, shot through the valiant heart of Tom Bowles. He did not like those ominous words, and still less the lugubrious

tone of voice in which they were uttered. But resolved, at least, to proceed to battle with more preparation than he had at first designed, he now deliberately disencumbered himself of his heavy fustian jacket and vest, rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and then slowly advanced towards the foe.

Kenelm had also, with still greater deliberation, taken off his coat—which he folded up with care, as being both a new and an only one, and deposited by the hedge-side—and bared arms, lean indeed and almost slight, as compared with the vast muscle of his adversary, but firm in sinew as the hind leg of a stag.

By this time the labourers, led by Jessie, had arrived at the spot, and were about to crowd in between the combatants, when Kenelm waved them back, and said in a calm and impressive voice—

“Stand round, my good friends, make a ring, and see that it is fair play on my side. I am sure it will be fair on Mr. Bowles’s. He is big enough to scorn what is little. And now, Mr. Bowles, just a word with you in the presence of your neighbours. I am not going to say anything uncivil. If you are rather rough and hasty, a man is not always master of himself—at least so I am told—when he thinks more than he ought to do about a pretty girl. But I can’t look at your face even by this moonlight, and though its expression at this moment is rather cross, without being sure that you are a fine fellow at bottom. And that if you give a promise as man to man you will keep it. Is that so?”

One or two of the bystanders murmured assent; the others pressed round in silent wonder.

“What’s all that soft-sawder about?” said Tom Bowles, somewhat falteringly.

“Simply this: if in the fight between us I beat you, I ask you to promise before your neighbours that you will not by word or deed molest or interfere again with Miss Jessie Wiles.”

“Eh!” roared Tom. “Is it that *you* are after her?”

“Suppose I am, if that pleases you; and on my side, I promise that, if you beat me, I quit this place as soon as you leave me well enough to do so, and will never visit it again.

What! do you hesitate to promise? Are you really afraid I shall lick you?"

"You! I'd smash a dozen of you to powder."

"In that case, you are safe to promise. Come, 'tis a fair bargain. Isn't it, neighbours?"

Won over by Kenelm's easy show of good temper, and by the sense of justice, the bystanders joined in a common exclamation of assent.

"Come, Tom," said an old fellow, "the gentleman can't speak fairer: and we shall all think you be afeard if you hold back."

Tom's face worked; but at last he growled, "Well, I promise—that is, if he beats me."

"All right," said Kenelm. "You hear, neighbours; and Tom Bowles could not show that handsome face of his among you if he broke his word. Shake hands on it."

Fighting Tom sulkily shook hands.

"Well now, that's what I call English," said Kenelm,—“all pluck and no malice. Fall back, friends, and leave a clear space for us.”

The men all receded; and as Kenelm took his ground, there was a supple ease in his posture which at once brought out into clearer evidence the nervous strength of his build, and, contrasted with Tom's bulk of chest, made the latter look clumsy and topheavy.

The two men faced each other a minute, the eyes of both vigilant and steadfast. Tom's blood began to fire up as he gazed—nor, with all his outward calm, was Kenelm insensible of that proud beat of the heart which is aroused by the fierce joy of combat. Tom struck out first and a blow was parried, but not returned; another and another blow—still parried—still unreturned. Kenelm, acting evidently on the defensive, took all the advantages for that strategy which he derived from superior length of arm and lighter agility of frame. Perhaps he wished to ascertain the extent of his adversary's skill, or to try the endurance of his wind, before he ventured on the hazards of attack. Tom, galled to the quick that blows which might have felled an ox were thus warded off from their mark, and dimly aware that he was encountering some mysterious skill

which turned his brute strength into waste force, and might overmaster him in the long run, came to a rapid conclusion that the sooner he brought that brute strength to bear, the better it would be for him. Accordingly, after three rounds, in which, without once breaking the guard of his antagonist, he had received a few playful taps on the nose and mouth, he drew back, and made a bull-like rush at his foe—bull-like, for it butted full at him with the powerful down-bent head, and the two fists doing duty as horns. The rush spent, he found himself in the position of a man *milled*. I take it for granted that every Englishman who can call himself a man—that is, every man who has been an English boy, and, as such, been compelled to the use of his fists—knows what a ‘mill’ is. But I sing not only “*pueris*,” but “*virginibus*.” Ladies,—‘a mill’—using with reluctance and contempt for myself, that slang in which lady-writers indulge, and Girls of the Period know much better than they do their Murray—‘a mill’—speaking not to lady-writers, not to Girls of the Period, but to innocent damsels, and in explanation to those foreigners who only understand the English language as taught by Addison and Macaulay—a ‘mill’ periphrastically means this : your adversary, in the noble encounter between fist and fist, has so plunged his head that it gets caught, as in a vice, between the side and doubled left arm of the adversary, exposing that head, unprotected and helpless, to be pounded out of recognisable shape by the right fist of the opponent. It is a situation in which raw superiority of force sometimes finds itself, and is seldom spared by disciplined superiority of skill. Kenelm, his right fist raised, paused for a moment, then, loosening the left arm, releasing the prisoner, and giving him a friendly slap on the shoulder, he turned round to the spectators, and said apologetically,—“He has a handsome face—it would be a shame to spoil it.”

Tom’s position of peril was so obvious to all, and that good-humoured abnegation of the advantage which the position gave to the adversary seemed so generous, that the labourers actually hurrahed. Tom himself felt as if treated like a child ; and alas, and alas for him ! in wheeling round, and regathering himself up, his eye rested on Jessie’s face. Her lips were

apart with breathless terror; he fancied they were apart with a smile of contempt. And now he became formidable. He fought as fights the bull in the presence of the heifer, who, as he knows too well, will go with the conqueror.

If Tom had never yet fought with a man taught by a prize-fighter, so never yet had Kenelm encountered a strength which, but for the lack of that teaching, would have conquered his own. He could act no longer on the defensive; he could no longer play, like a dexterous fencer, with the sledge-hammers of those mighty arms. They broke through his guard—they sounded on his chest as on an anvil. He felt that did they alight on his head he was a lost man. He felt also that the blows spent on the chest of his adversary were idle as the stroke of a cane on the hide of a rhinoceros. But now his nostrils dilated, his eyes flashed fire—Kenelm Chillingly had ceased to be a philosopher. Crash came his blow—how unlike the swinging round-about hits of Tom Bowles!—straight to its aim as the rifle-ball of a Tyrolese, or a British marksman at Aldershot—all the strength of nerve, sinew, purpose, and mind centred in its vigour,—crash just at that part of the front where the eyes meet, and followed up with the rapidity of lightning, flash upon flash, by a more restrained but more disabling blow with the left hand just where the left ear meets throat and jaw-bone.

At the first blow Tom Bowles had reeled and staggered, at the second he threw up his hands, made a jump in the air as if shot through the heart, and then heavily fell forwards, an inert mass.

The spectators pressed round him in terror. They thought he was dead. Kenelm knelt, passed quickly his hand over Tom's lips, pulse, and heart, and then rising, said, humbly and with an air of apology—

“If he had been a less magnificent creature, I assure you on my honour that I should never have ventured that second blow. The first would have done for any man less splendidly endowed by nature. Lift him gently; take him home. Tell his mother, with my kind regards, that I'll call and see her and him to-morrow. And, stop, does he ever drink too much beer?”

"Well," said one of the villagers, "Tom *can* drink."

"I thought so. Too much flesh for that muscle. Go for the nearest doctor. You, my lad?—good—off with you—quick! No danger, but perhaps it may be a case for the lancet."

Tom Bowles was lifted tenderly by four of the stoutest men present and borne into his home, evincing no sign of consciousness; but his face, where not clouted with blood, very pale, very calm, with a slight froth at the lips.

Kenelm pulled down his shirt-sleeves, put on his coat, and turned to Jessie—

"Now, my young friend, show me Will's cottage."

The girl came to him white and trembling. She did not dare to speak. The stranger had become a new man in her eyes. Perhaps he frightened her as much as Tom Bowles had done. But she quickened her pace, leaving the public-house behind till she came to the further end of the village. Kenelm walked beside her, muttering to himself; and though Jessie caught his words, happily she did not understand, for they repeated one of those bitter reproaches on her sex as the main cause of all strife, bloodshed and mischief in general, with which the classic authors abound. His spleen soothed by that recourse to the lessons of the ancients, Kenelm turned at last to his silent companion, and said kindly but gravely—

"Mr. Bowles has given me his promise, and it is fair that I should now ask a promise from you. It is this—just consider how easily a girl so pretty as you can be the cause of a man's death. Had Bowles struck me where I struck him I should have been past the help of a surgeon."

"Oh!" groaned Jessie, shuddering, and covering her face with both hands.

"And, putting aside that danger, consider that a man may be hit mortally on the heart as well as on the head, and that a woman has much to answer for who, no matter what her excuse, forgets what misery and what guilt can be inflicted by a word from her lip and a glance from her eye. Consider this, and promise that, whether you marry Will Somers or not, you will never again give a man fair cause to think you can like

him unless your own heart tells you that you can. Will you promise that?"

"I will, indeed—indeed." Poor Jessie's voice died in sobs.

"There, my child, I don't ask you not to cry, because I know how much women like crying, and in this instance it does you a great deal of good. But we are just at the end of the village; which is Will's cottage?"

Jessie lifted her head, and pointed to a solitary, small thatched cottage.

"I would ask you to come in and introduce me; but that might look too much like crowing over poor Tom Bowles. So good-night to you, Jessie, and forgive me for preaching."

CHAPTER XIII.

KENELM knocked at the cottage door; a voice said faintly, "Come in."

He stooped his head, and stepped over the threshold.

Since his encounter with Tom Bowles his sympathies had gone with that unfortunate lover—it is natural to like a man after you have beaten him; and he was by no means pre-disposed to favour Jessie's preference for a sickly cripple.

Yet, when two bright, soft, dark eyes, and a pale intellectual countenance, with that nameless aspect of refinement which delicate health so often gives, especially to the young, greeted his quiet gaze, his heart was at once won over to the side of the rival. Will Somers was seated by the hearth, on which a few live embers despite the warmth of the summer evening still burned; a rude little table was by his side, on which were laid osier twigs and white peeled chips, together with an open book. His hands, pale and slender, were at work on a small basket half finished. His mother was just clearing away the tea-things from another table that stood by the window. Will rose, with the good breeding that belongs to the rural peasant, as the stranger entered; the widow looked

round with surprise, and dropped her simple courtesy—a little thin woman, with a mild patient face.

The cottage was very tidily kept, as it is in most village homes where the woman has it her own way. The deal dresser opposite the door had its display of humble crockery. The whitewashed walls were relieved with coloured prints, chiefly Scriptural subjects from the New Testament, such as the Return of the Prodigal Son, in a blue coat and yellow inexpressibles, with his stockings about his heels.

At one corner there were piled up baskets of various sizes, and at another corner was an open cupboard containing books—an article of decorative furniture found in cottages much more rarely than coloured prints and gleaming crockery.

All this, of course, Kenelm could not at a glance comprehend in detail. But as the mind of a man, accustomed to generalisation is marvellously quick in forming a sound judgment, whereas a mind accustomed to dwell only on detail is wonderfully slow at arriving at any judgment at all, and when it does, the probability is that it will arrive at a wrong one, Kenelm judged correctly when he came to this conclusion: "I am among simple English peasants; but, for some reason or other, not to be explained by the relative amount of wages, it is a favourable specimen of that class."

"I beg your pardon for intruding at this hour, Mrs. Somers," said Kenelm, who had been too familiar with peasants from his earliest childhood not to know how quickly, when in the presence of their household gods, they appreciate respect, and how acutely they feel the want of it. "But my stay in the village is very short, and I should not like to leave without seeing your son's basket-work, of which I have heard much."

"You are very good, sir," said Will, with a pleased smile that wonderfully brightened up his face. "It is only just a few common things that I keep by me. Any finer sort of work I mostly do by order."

"You see, sir," said Mrs. Somers, "it takes so much more time for pretty work-baskets, and such like; and unless done to order, it might be a chance if he could get it sold. But pray be seated, sir," and Mrs. Somers placed a chair for her

visitor, "while I just run up stairs for the work-basket which my son has made for Miss Travers. It is to go home to-morrow, and I put it away for fear of accidents."

Kenelm seated himself, and, drawing his chair near to Will's, took up the half-finished basket which the young man had laid down on the table.

"This seems to me very nice and delicate workmanship," said Kenelm; "and the shape, when you have finished it, will be elegant enough to please the taste of a lady."

"It is for Mrs. Lethbridge," said Will; "she wanted something to hold cards and letters; and I took the shape from a book of drawings which Mr. Lethbridge kindly lent me. You know Mr. Lethbridge, sir? He is a very good gentleman."

"No, I don't know him. Who is he?"

"Our clergyman, sir. This is the book."

To Kenelm's surprise, it was a work on Pompeii, and contained woodcuts of the implements and ornaments, mosaics and frescoes, found in that memorable little city.

"I see this is your model," said Kenelm; "what they call a *patera*, and rather a famous one. You are copying it much more truthfully than I should have supposed it possible to do in substituting basket-work for bronze. But you observe that much of the beauty of this shallow bowl depends on the two doves perched on the brim. You can't manage that ornamental addition."

"Mrs. Lethbridge thought of putting there two little stuffed canary-birds."

"Did she? Good heavens!" exclaimed Kenelm.

"But somehow," continued Will, "I did not like that, and I made bold to say so."

"Why did not you do it?"

"Well, I don't know; but I did not think it would be the right thing."

"It would have been very bad taste, and spoilt the effect of your basket-work; and I'll endeavour to explain why. You see here, in the next page, a drawing of a very beautiful statue. Of course this statue is intended to be a representation of nature—but nature idealised. You don't know the meaning

of that hard word, idealised, and very few people do. But it means the performance of a something in art according to the idea which a man's mind forms to itself out of a something in nature. That something in nature must, of course, have been carefully studied before the man can work out anything in art by which it is faithfully represented. The artist, for instance, who made that statue, must have known the proportions of the human frame. He must have made studies of various parts of it—heads and hands, and arms and legs, and so forth—and having done so, he then puts together all his various studies of details, so as to form a new whole, which is intended to personate an idea formed in his own mind. Do you go with me?"

"Partly, sir; but I am puzzled a little still."

"Of course you are; but you'll puzzle yourself right if you think over what I say. Now if, in order to make this statue, which is composed of metal or stone, more natural, I stuck on it a wig of real hair, would not you feel at once that I had spoilt the work—that as you clearly express it, 'it would not be the right thing'?—and instead of making the work of art more natural, I should have made it laughably unnatural, by forcing insensibly upon the mind of him who looked at it the contrast between the real life, represented by a wig of actual hair, and the artistic life, represented by an idea embodied in stone or metal. The higher the work of art (that is, the higher the idea it represents as a new combination of details taken from nature), the more it is degraded or spoilt by an attempt to give it a kind of reality which is out of keeping with the materials employed. But the same rule applies to everything in art, however humble. And a couple of stuffed canary-birds at the brim of a basket-work imitation of a Greek drinking-cup, would be as bad taste as a wig from the barber's on the head of a marble statue of Apollo."

"I see," said Will, his head downcast, like a man pondering—"at least I think I see; and I'm very much obliged to you, sir."

Mrs. Somers had long since returned with the work-basket,

but stood with it in her hands, not daring to interrupt the gentleman, and listening to his discourse with as much patience and as little comprehension as if it had been one of the controversial sermons upon Ritualism with which on great occasions Mr. Lethbridge favoured his congregation.

Kenelm having now exhausted his critical lecture—from which certain poets and novelists, who contrive to caricature the ideal by their attempt to put wigs of real hair upon the heads of stone statues, might borrow a useful hint or two if they would condescend to do so, which is not likely—perceived Mrs. Somers standing by him, took from her the basket, which was really very pretty and elegant, subdivided into various compartments for the implements in use among ladies, and bestowed on it a well-merited eulogium.

“The young lady means to finish it herself with ribbons, and line it with satin,” said Mrs. Somers, proudly.

“The ribbons will not be amiss, sir?” said Will, interrogatively.

“Not at all. Your natural sense of the fitness of things tells you that ribbons go well with straw and light straw-like work such as this; though you would not put ribbons on those rude hampers and game-baskets in the corner. Like to like; a stout cord goes suitably with them; just as a poet who understands his art employs pretty expressions for poems intended to be pretty and suit a fashionable drawing-room, and carefully shuns them to substitute a simple cord for poems intended to be strong and travel far, despite of rough usage by the way. But you really ought to make much more money by this fancy-work than you could as a day-labourer.”

Will sighed. “Not in this neighbourhood, sir, I might in a town.”

“Why not move to a town, then?”

The young man coloured, and shook his head.

Kenelm turned appealingly to Mrs. Somers. “I’ll be willing to go wherever it would be best for my boy, sir. But——” and here she checked herself, and a tear trickled silently down her cheeks.

Will resumed, in a more cheerful tone, “I am getting a little known now, and work will come if one waits for it.”

Kenelm did not deem it courteous or discreet to intrude further on Will's confidence in the first interview; and he began to feel, more than he had done at first, not only the dull pain of the bruises he had received in the recent combat, but also somewhat more than the weariness which follows a long summer-day's work in the open air. He therefore, rather abruptly, now took his leave, saying that he should be very glad of a few specimens of Will's ingenuity and skill, and would call or write to give directions about them.

Just as he came in sight of Tom Bowles's house on his way back to Mr. Saunderson's, Kenelm saw a man mounting a pony that stood tied up at the gate, and exchanging a few words with a respectable-looking woman before he rode on. He was passing by Kenelm without notice, when that philosophical vagrant stopped him, saying, "If I am not mistaken, sir, you are the doctor. There is not much the matter with Mr. Bowles?"

The doctor shook his head. "I can't say yet. He has had a very ugly blow somewhere."

"It was just under the left ear. I did not aim at that exact spot; but Bowles unluckily swerved a little aside at the moment, perhaps in surprise at a tap between his eyes immediately preceding it: and so, as you say, it was an ugly blow that he received. But if it cures him of the habit of giving ugly blows to other people who can bear them less safely, perhaps it may be all for his good, as, no doubt, sir, your schoolmaster said when he flogged you."

"Bless my soul! are you the man who fought with him—you? I can't believe it."

"Why not?"

"Why not! So far as I can judge by this light, though you are a tall fellow, Tom Bowles must be a much heavier weight than you are."

"Tom Spring was the champion of England; and according to the records of his weight, which history has preserved in her archives, Tom Spring was a lighter weight than I am."

"But are you a prize-fighter?"

"I am as much that as I am anything else. But to return to Mr. Bowles, was it necessary to bleed him?"

"Yes; he was unconscious, or nearly so, when I came. I took away a few ounces, and I am happy to say he is now sensible, but must be kept very quiet."

"No doubt; but I hope he will be well enough to see me to-morrow."

"I hope so too; but I can't say yet. Quarrel about a girl—eh?"

"It was not about money. And I suppose if there were no money and no women in the world, there would be no quarrels, and very few doctors. Good-night, sir."

"It is a strange thing to me," said Kenelm, as he now opened the garden-gate of Mr. Saunderson's homestead, "that though I've had nothing to eat all day, except a few pitiful sandwiches, I don't feel the least hungry. Such arrest of the lawful duties of the digestive organs never happened to me before. There must be something weird and ominous in it."

On entering the parlour, the family party, though they had long since finished supper, were still seated round the table. They all rose at the sight of Kenelm. The fame of his achievements had preceded him. He checked the congratulations, the compliments, and the questions which the hearty farmer rapidly heaped upon him, with a melancholic exclamation, "But I have lost my appetite! No honours can compensate for that. Let me go to bed peaceably, and perhaps in the magic land of sleep Nature may restore me by a dream of supper."

CHAPTER XIV.

KENELM rose betimes the next morning somewhat stiff and uneasy, but sufficiently recovered to feel ravenous. Fortunately one of the young ladies who attended specially to the dairy was already up, and supplied the starving hero with a vast bowl of bread and milk. He then strolled into the hay-field, in which there was now very little left to do, and but few hands besides his own were employed. Jessie was not

there. Kenelm was glad of that. By nine o'clock his work was over, and the farmer and his men were in the yard completing the ricks. Kenelm stole away unobserved, bent on a round of visits. He called first at the village shop kept by Mrs. Bawtrey, which Jessie had pointed out to him, on pretence of buying a gaudy neckerchief; and soon, thanks to his habitual civility, made familiar acquaintance with the shopwoman. She was a little sickly old lady, her head shaking, as with palsy, somewhat deaf, but still shrewd and sharp, rendered mechanically so by long habits of shrewdness and sharpness. She became very communicative, spoke freely of her desire to give up the shop, and pass the rest of her days with a sister, widowed like herself, in a neighbouring town. Since she had lost her husband, the field and orchard attached to the shop had ceased to be profitable, and become a great care and trouble; and the attention the shop required was wearisome. But she had twelve years unexpired of the lease granted for twenty-one years to her husband on low terms, and she wanted a premium for its transfer, and a purchaser for the stock of the shop. Kenelm soon drew from her the amount of the sum she required for all—45*l*.

"You ben't thinking of it for yourself?" she asked, putting on her spectacles, and examining him with care.

"Perhaps so, if one could get a decent living out of it. Do you keep a book of your loses and your gains?"

"In course, sir," she said, proudly. "I kept the books in my good man's time, and he was one who could find out if there was a farthing wrong, for he had been in a lawyer's office when a lad."

"Why did he leave a lawyer's office to keep a little shop?"

"Well, he was born a farmer's son in this neighbourhood, and he always had a hankering after the country, and—and besides that——"

"Yes."

"I'll tell you the truth; he had got into a way of drinking speerrits, and he was a good young man, and wanted to break himself of it, and he took the temperance oath; but it was too hard on him, for he could not break himself of the company

that led him into liquor. And so, one time when he came into the neighbourhood to see his parents for the Christmas holiday, he took a bit of liking to me; and my father, who was Squire Travers's bailiff, had just died, and left me a little money. And so, somehow or other, we came together, and got this house and the land from the Squire on lease very reasonable; and my goodman being well eddycated, and much thought of, and never being tempted to drink, now that he had a missis to keep him in order, had a many little things put into his way. He could help to measure timber, and knew about draining, and he got some bookkeeping from the farmers about; and we kept cows and pigs and poultry, and so we did very well, specially as the Lord was merciful and sent us no children."

"And what does the shop bring in a-year since your husband died?"

"You had best judge for yourself. Will you look at the book, and take a peep at the land and apple-trees? But they's been neglected since my good man died."

In another minute the heir of the Chillinglys was seated in a neat little back parlour, with a pretty, though confined, view of the orchard and grass slope behind it, and bending over Mrs. Bawtrey's ledger.

Some customers for cheese and bacon coming now into the shop, the old woman left him to his studies. Though they were not of a nature familiar to him, he brought to them, at least, that general clearness of head and quick seizure of important points which are common to most men who have gone through some disciplined training of intellect, and been accustomed to extract the pith and marrow out of many books on many subjects. The result of his examination was satisfactory; there appeared to him a clear balance of gain from the shop alone of somewhat over 40% a-year, taking the average of the last three years. Closing the book, he then let himself out of the window into the orchard, and thence into the neighbouring grass field. Both were, indeed, much neglected; the trees wanted pruning, the field manure. But the soil was evidently of rich loam, and the fruit-trees were abundant and of ripe age,

generally looking healthy in spite of neglect. With the quick intuition of a man born and bred in the country, and picking up scraps of rural knowledge unconsciously, Kenelm convinced himself that the land, properly managed, would far more than cover the rent, rates, tithes, and all incidental outgoings, leaving the profits of the shop as the clear income of the occupiers. And no doubt with clever young people to manage the shop, its profits might be increased.

Not thinking it necessary to return at present to Mrs. Bawtreys, Kenelm now bent his way to Tom Bowles's.

The house-door was closed. At the summons of his knock it was quickly opened by a tall, stout, remarkably fine-looking woman, who might have told fifty years, and carried them off lightly on her ample shoulders. She was dressed very respectably in black, her brown hair braided simply under a neat tight-fitting cap. Her features were aquiline and very regular—altogether there was something about her majestic and Cornelia-like. She might have sat for the model of that Roman matron, except for the fairness of her Anglo-Saxon complexion.

"What's your pleasure?" she asked, in a cold and somewhat stern voice.

"Ma'am," answered Kenelm, uncovering, "I have called to see Mr. Bowles, and I sincerely hope he is well enough to let me do so."

"No, sir, he is not well enough for that; he is lying down in his own room, and must be kept quiet."

"May I then ask you the favour to let me in? I would say a few words to you who are his mother, if I mistake not."

Mrs. Bowles paused a moment as if in doubt; but she was at no loss to detect in Kenelm's manner something superior to the fashion of his dress, and supposing the visit might refer to her son's professional business, she opened the door wider, drew aside to let him pass first, and when he stood midway in the parlour, requested him to take a seat, and to set him the example, seated herself.

"Ma'am," said Kenelm, "do not regret to have admitted me,

and do not think hardly of me when I inform you that I am the unfortunate cause of your son's accident."

Mrs. Bowles rose with a start.

"You're the man who beat my boy?"

"No, ma'am, do not say I beat him. He is not beaten. He is so brave and so strong that he would easily have beaten me if I had not, by good luck, knocked him down before he had time to do so. Pray, ma'am, retain your seat and listen to me patiently for a few moments."

Mrs. Bowles, with an indignant heave of her Juno-like bosom, and with a superbly haughty expression of countenance, which suited well with its aquiline formation, tacitly obeyed.

"You will allow, ma'am," recommenced Kenelm, "that this is not the first time by many that Mr. Bowles has come to blows with another man. Am I not right in that assumption?"

"My son is of hasty temper," replied Mrs. Bowles, reluctantly, "and people should not aggravate him."

"You grant the fact, then?" said Kenelm, imperturbably, but with a polite inclination of head. "Mr. Bowles has often been engaged in these encounters, and in all of them it is quite clear that he provoked the battle; for you must be aware that he is not the sort of man to whom any other would be disposed to give the first blow. Yet, after these little incidents had occurred, and Mr. Bowles had, say, half killed the person who aggravated him, you did not feel any resentment against that person, did you? Nay, if he had wanted nursing, you would have gone and nursed him."

"I don't know as to nursing," said Mrs. Bowles, beginning to lose her dignity of mien; "but certainly I should have been very sorry for him. And as for Tom—though I say it who should not say—he has no more malice than a baby—he'd go and make it up with any man, however badly he had beaten him."

"Just as I supposed; and if the man had sulked and would not make it up, Tom would have called him a bad fellow, and felt inclined to beat him again."

Mrs. Bowles's face relaxed into a stately smile.

"Well, then," pursued Kenelm, "I do but humbly imitate Mr. Bowles, and I come to make it up and shake hands with him."

"No, sir—no," exclaimed Mrs. Bowles, though in a low voice, and turning pale. "Don't think of it: 'Tis not the blows—he'll get over those fast enough; 'tis his pride that's hurt; and if he saw you there might be mischief. But you're a stranger, and going away ;—do go soon—do keep out of his way—do!" And the mother clasped her hands.

"Mrs. Bowles," said Kenelm, with a change of voice and aspect—a voice and aspect so earnest and impressive that they stilled and awed her—"will you not help me to save your son from the dangers into which that hasty temper and that mischievous pride may at any moment hurry him? Does it never occur to you that these are the causes of terrible crime, bringing terrible punishment; and that against brute force, impelled by savage passions, society protects itself by the hulks and the gallows?"

"Sir, how dare you——"

"Hush! If one man kill another in a moment of ungovernable wrath, that is a crime which, though heavily punished by the conscience, is gently dealt with by the law, which calls it only manslaughter; but if a motive to the violence—such as jealousy or revenge—can be assigned, and there should be no witness by to prove that the violence was not premeditated, then the law does not call it manslaughter, but murder. Was it not that thought which made you so imploringly exclaim, 'Go soon; keep out of his way'?"

The woman made no answer, but sinking back in her chair, gasped for breath.

"Nay, madam," resumed Kenelm, mildly; "banish your fears. If you will help me I feel sure that I can save your son from such perils, and I only ask you to let me save him. I am convinced that he has a good and a noble nature, and he is worth saving." And as he thus said he took her hand. She resigned it to him and returned the pressure, all her pride softening as she began to weep.

At length, when she recovered voice, she said—

"It is all along of that girl. He was not so till she crossed

him, and made him half mad. He is not the same man since then—my poor Tom !”

“Do you know that he has given me his word, and before his fellow-villagers, that if he had the worst of the fight he would never molest Jessie Wiles again ?”

“Yes, he told me so himself ; and it is that which weighs on him now. He broods, and broods, and mutters, and will not be comforted ; and—and I do fear that he means revenge. And again, I implore you keep out of his way.”

“It is not revenge on me that he thinks of. Suppose I go and am seen no more, do you think in your own heart that that girl’s life is safe ?”

“What ! My Tom kill a woman !”

“Do you never read in your newspaper of a man who kills his sweetheart, or the girl who refuses to be his sweetheart ? At all events, you yourself do not approve this frantic suit of his. If I have heard rightly, you have wished to get Tom out of the village for some time, till Jessie Wiles is—we’ll say, married, or gone elsewhere for good.”

“Yes, indeed, I have wished and prayed for it many’s the time, both for her sake and for his. And I am sure I don’t know what we shall do if he stays, for he has been losing custom fast. The Squire has taken away his, and so have many of the farmers ; and such a trade as it was in his good father’s time ! And if he would go, his uncle, the veterinary at Luscombe, would take him into partnership ; for he has no son of his own, and he knows how clever Tom is ;—there ben’t a man who knows more about horses ; and cows, too, for the matter of that.”

“And if Luscombe is a large place, the business there must be more profitable than it can be here, even if Tom got back his custom ?”

“Oh yes ! five times as good—if he would but go ; but he’ll not hear of it.”

“Mrs. Bowles, I am very much obliged to you for your confidence, and I feel sure that all will end happily, now we have had this talk. I’ll not press farther on you at present. Tom will not stir out, I suppose, till the evening.”

"Ah, sir, he seems as if he had no heart to stir out again, unless for something dreadful."

"Courage! I will call again in the evening, and then you just take me up to Tom's room, and leave me there to make friends with him, as I have with you. Don't say a word about me in the meanwhile."

"But——"

"'But,' Mrs. Bowles, is a word that cools many a warm impulse, stifles many a kindly thought, puts a dead stop to many a brotherly deed. Nobody would ever love his neighbour as himself if he listened to all the Buts that could be said on the other side of the question."

CHAPTER XV.

KENELM now bent his way towards the parsonage, but just as he neared its glebe-lands he met a gentleman whose dress was so evidently clerical that he stopped and said—

"Have I the honour to address Mr. Lethbridge?"

"That is my name," said the clergyman, smiling pleasantly. "Anything I can do for you?"

"Yes, a great deal, if you will let me talk to you about a few of your parishioners."

"My parishioners! I beg your pardon, but you are quite a stranger to me, and, I should think, to the parish."

"To the parish—no, I am quite at home in it; and I honestly believe that it has never known a more officious busybody thrusting himself into its most private affairs."

Mr. Lethbridge stared, and, after a short pause, said—"I have heard of a young man who has been staying at Mr. Saunderson's, and is indeed at this moment the talk of the village. You are——"

"That young man. Alas! yes."

"Nay," said Mr. Lethbridge, kindly, "I cannot myself, as a minister of the Gospel, approve of your profession, and, if I

might take the liberty, I would try and dissuade you from it; but still, as for the one act of freeing a poor girl from the most scandalous persecution, and administering, though in a rough way, a lesson to a savage brute who has long been the disgrace and terror of the neighbourhood, I cannot honestly say that it has my condemnation. The moral sense of a community is generally a right one—you have won the praise of the village. Under all the circumstances, I do not withhold mine. You woke this morning and found yourself famous. Do not sigh 'Alas.'"

"Lord Byron woke one morning and found himself famous, and the result was that he sighed 'Alas' for the rest of his life. If there be two things which a wise man should avoid, they are fame and love. Heaven defend me from both!"

Again the parson stared; but being of compassionate nature, and inclined to take mild views of everything that belongs to humanity, he said, with a slight inclination of his head—

"I have always heard that the Americans in general enjoy the advantage of a better education than we do in England, and their reading public is infinitely larger than ours; still, when I hear one of a calling not highly considered in this country for intellectual cultivation or ethical philosophy cite Lord Byron, and utter a sentiment at variance with the impetuosity of inexperienced youth, but which has much to commend it in the eyes of a reflective Christian impressed with the nothingness of the objects mostly coveted by the human heart, I am surprised, and—Oh, my dear young friend, surely your education might fit you for something better!"

It was among the maxims of Kenelm Chillingly's creed that a sensible man should never allow himself to be surprised; but here he was, to use a popular idiom, "taken aback," and lowered himself to the rank of ordinary minds by saying, simply, "I don't understand."

"I see," resumed the clergyman, shaking his head gently, "as I always suspected, that in the vaunted education bestowed on Americans, the elementary principles of Christian right and wrong are more neglected than they are among our own humble classes. Yes, my young friend, you may quote

poets, you may startle me by remarks on the nothingness of human fame and human love, derived from the precepts of heathen poets, and yet not understand with what compassion, and, in the judgment of most sober-minded persons, with what contempt, a human being who practises your vocation is regarded."

"Have I a vocation?" said Kenelm. "I am very glad to hear it. What is my vocation? and why must I be an American?"

"Why—surely I am not misinformed? You are the American—I forget his name—who has come over to contest the belt of prize-fighting with the champion of England. You are silent; you hang your head. By your appearance, your length of limb, your gravity of countenance, your evident education, you confirm the impression of your birth. Your prowess has proved your profession."

"Reverend sir," said Kenelm, with his unutterable seriousness of aspect, "I am on my travels in search of truth and in flight from shams, but so great a take-in as myself I have not yet encountered. Remember me in your prayers. I am not an American; I am not a prize-fighter. I honour the first as the citizen of a grand republic trying his best to accomplish an experiment in government in which he will find the very prosperity he tends to create will sooner or later destroy his experiment. I honour the last because strength, courage, and sobriety are essential to the prize-fighter, and are among the chiefest ornaments of kings and heroes. But I am neither one nor the other. And all I can say for myself is, that I belong to that very vague class commonly called English gentlemen, and that, by birth and education, I have a right to ask you to shake hands with me as such."

Mr. Lethbridge stared again, raised his hat, bowed, and shook hands.

"You will allow me now to speak to you about your parishioners. You take an interest in Will Somers—so do I. He is clever and ingenious. But it seems there is not sufficient demand here for his baskets, and he would, no doubt, do better in some neighbouring town. Why does he object to move?"

"I fear that poor Will would pine away to death if he lost sight of that pretty girl for whom you did such chivalrous battle with Tom Bowles."

"The unhappy man, then, is really in love with Jessie Wiles? And do you think she no less really cares for him?"

"I am sure of it."

"And would make him a good wife—that is, as wives go?"

"A good daughter generally makes a good wife. And there is not a father in the place who has a better child than Jessie is to hers. She really is a girl of a superior nature. She was the cleverest pupil at our school, and my wife is much attached to her. But she has something better than mere cleverness; she has an excellent heart."

"What you say confirms my own impressions. And the girl's father has no other objection to Will Somers than his fear that Will could not support a wife and family comfortably."

"He can have no other objection save that which would apply equally to all suitors. I mean his fear lest Tom Bowles might do her some mischief, if he knew she was about to marry any one else."

"You think, then, that Mr. Bowles is a thoroughly bad and dangerous person?"

"Thoroughly bad and dangerous, and worse since he has taken to drinking."

"I suppose he did not take to drinking till he lost his wits for Jessie Wiles?"

"No, I don't think he did."

"But, Mr. Lethbridge, have you never used your influence over this dangerous man?"

"Of course, I did try, but I only got insulted. He is a godless animal, and has not been inside a church for years. He seems to have got a smattering of such vile learning as may be found in infidel publications, and I doubt if he has any religion at all."

"Poor Polyphemus! no wonder his Galatea shuns him."

"Old Wiles is terribly frightened, and asked my wife to find Jessie a place as servant at a distance. But Jessie can't bear the thoughts of leaving."

"For the same reason which attaches Will Somers to the native soil?"

"My wife thinks so."

"Do you believe that if Tom Bowles were out of the way, and Jessie and Will were man and wife, they could earn a sufficient livelihood as successors to Mrs. Bawtre; Will adding the profits of his basket-work to those of the shop and land?"

"A sufficient livelihood! of course. They would be quite rich. I know the shop used to turn a great deal of money. The old woman, to be sure, is no longer up to the business, but still she retains a good custom."

"Will Somers seems in delicate health. Perhaps if he had a less weary struggle for a livelihood, and no fear of losing Jessie, his health would improve."

"His life would be saved, sir."

"Then," said Kenelm, with a heavy sigh and a face as long as an undertaker's, "though I myself entertain a profound compassion for that disturbance to our mental equilibrium which goes by the name of 'love,' and I am the last person who ought to add to the cares and sorrows which marriage entails upon its victims—I say nothing of the woes destined to those whom marriage usually adds to a population already overcrowded—I fear that I must be the means of bringing these two love-birds into the same cage. I am ready to purchase the shop and its appurtenances on their behalf, on the condition that you will kindly obtain the consent of Jessie's father to their union. As for my brave friend Tom Bowles, I undertake to deliver them and the village from that exuberant nature, which requires a larger field for its energies. Pardon me for not letting you interrupt me. I have not yet finished what I have to say. Allow me to ask if Mrs. Grundy resides in this village."

"Mrs. Grundy! Oh, I understand. Of course; wherever a woman has a tongue, there Mrs. Grundy has a home."

"And seeing that Jessie is very pretty, and that in walking with her I encountered Mr. Bowles, might not Mrs. Grundy say, with a toss of her head—'that it was not out of pure

charity that the stranger had been so liberal to Jessie Wiles' ? But if the money for the shop be paid through you to Mrs. Bawtrej, and you kindly undertake all the contingent arrangements, Mrs. Grundy will have nothing to say against any one."

Mr. Lethbridge gazed with amaze at the solemn countenance before him.

"Sir," he said, after a long pause, "I scarcely know how to express my admiration of a generosity so noble, so thoughtful, and accompanied with a delicacy, and, indeed, with a wisdom, which—which——"

"Pray, my dear sir, do not make me still more ashamed of myself than I am at present, for an interference in love matters quite alien to my own convictions as to the best mode of making an 'Approach to the Angels.' To conclude this business, I think it better to deposit in your hands the sum of 45*l.*, for which Mrs. Bawtrej has agreed to sell the remainder of her lease and stock-in-hand ; but, of course, you will not make anything public till I am gone, and Tom Bowles too. I hope I may get him away to-morrow ; but I shall know to-night when I can depend on his departure—and till he goes I must stay."

As he spoke, Kenelm transferred from his pocket-book to Mr. Lethbridge's hand bank-notes to the amount specified.

"May I at least ask the name of the gentleman who honours me with his confidence, and has bestowed so much happiness on members of my flock?"

"There is no great reason why I should not tell you my name, but I see no reason why I should. You remember Talleyrand's advice—'If you are in doubt whether to write a letter or not—don't.' The advice applies to many doubts in life besides that of letter-writing. Farewell, sir!"

"A most extraordinary young man," muttered the parson, gazing at the receding form of the tall stranger ; then gently shaking his head, he added, "Quite an original." He was contented with that solution of the difficulties which had puzzled him. May the reader be the same.

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER the family dinner, at which the farmer's guest displayed more than his usual powers of appetite, Kenelm followed his host towards the stackyard, and said—

"My dear Mr. Saunderson, though you have no longer any work for me to do, and I ought not to trespass farther on your hospitality; yet if I might stay with you another day or so, I should be very grateful."

"My dear lad," cried the farmer, in whose estimation Kenelm had risen prodigiously since the victory over Tom Bowles, "you are welcome to stay as long as you like, and we shall be all sorry when you go. Indeed, at all events, you must stay over Saturday, for you shall go with us to the Squire's harvest-supper. It will be a pretty sight, and my girls are already counting on you for a dance."

"Saturday—the day after to-morrow. You are very kind; but merry-makings are not much in my way, and I think I shall be on my road before you set off to the Squire's supper."

"Pooh! you shall stay; and, I say, young 'un, if you want more to do, I have a job for you quite in your line."

"What is it?"

"Thrash my ploughman. He has been insolent this morning, and he is the biggest fellow in the county, next to Tom Bowles."

Here the farmer laughed heartily, enjoying his own joke.

"Thank you for nothing," said Kenelm, rubbing his bruises. "A burnt child dreads the fire."

The young man wandered alone into the fields. The day was becoming overcast, and the clouds threatened rain. The air was exceedingly still; the landscape, missing the sunshine, wore an aspect of gloomy solitude. Kenelm came to the banks of the rivulet not far from the spot on which the farmer had first found him. There he sat down, and leant his cheek on his hand, with eyes fixed on the still and darkened stream lapsing mournfully away: sorrow entered into his heart and tinged its musings.

"Is it then true," said he, soliloquising, "that I am born to pass through life utterly alone; asking, indeed, for no sister-half of myself, disbelieving its possibility, shrinking from the thought of it—half scorning, half pitying those who sigh for it?—thing unattainable—better sigh for the moon!

"Yet if other men sigh for it, why do I stand apart from them? If the world be a stage, and all the men and women in it merely players, am I to be the solitary spectator, with no part in the drama, and no interest in the vicissitudes of its plot? Many there are, no doubt, who covet as little as I do the part of 'Lover,' 'with a woeful ballad, made to his mistress' eyebrow;' but then they covet some other part in the drama, such as that of Soldier 'bearded as a pard,' or that of Justice 'in fair round belly with fat capon lined.' But me no ambition fires—I have no longing either to rise or to shine. I don't desire to be a colonel, nor an admiral, nor a member of Parliament, nor an alderman; I do not yearn for the fame of a wit, or a poet, or a philosopher, or a diner-out, or a crack shot at a rifle-match or a *battue*. Decidedly, I am the one looker-on, the one bystander and have no more concern with the active world than a stone has. It is a horrible phantasmal crotchet of Goethe's, that originally we were all monads, little segregated atoms adrift in the atmosphere, and carried hither and thither by forces over which we had no control, especially by the attraction of other monads, so that one monad, compelled by porcine monads, crystallises into a pig; another, hurried along by heroic monads, becomes a lion or an Alexander. Now it is quite clear," continued Kenelm, shifting his position and crossing the right leg over the left, "that a monad intended or fitted for some other planet may, on its way to that destination, be encountered by a current of other monads blowing earthward, and be caught up in the stream and whirled on, till, to the marring of its whole proper purpose and scene of action, it settles here—conglomerated into a baby. Probably that lot has befallen me: my monad, meant for another region in space, has been dropped into this, where it can never be at home, never amalgamate with other monads, nor comprehend why they are in such a perpetual fidget. I declare I know no more why the minds

of human beings should be so restlessly agitated about things which, as most of them own, give more pain than pleasure, than I understand why that swarm of gnats, which has such a very short time to live, does not give itself a moment's repose, but goes up and down, rising and falling as if it were on a seesaw, and making as much noise about its insignificant alternations of ascent and descent, as if it were the hum of men. And yet, perhaps, in another planet my monad would have frisked, and jumped, and danced, and seesawed with congenial monads, as contentedly and as sillily as do the monads of men and gnats in this alien Vale of Tears."

Kenelm had just arrived at that conjectural solution of his perplexities when a voice was heard singing, or rather modulated to that kind of chant between recitative and song, which is so pleasingly effective where the intonations are pure and musical. They were so in this instance, and Kenelm's ear caught every word in the following song:—

CONTENT.

- "There are times when the troubles of life are still;
The bees wandered lost in the depths of June,
And I paused where the chime of a silver rill
Sang the linnet and lark to their rest at noon.
- "Said my soul—'See how calmly the wavelets glide,
Though so narrow their way to their ocean-vent;
And the world that I traverse is wide, is wide,
And yet is too narrow to hold content.'
- "O my soul, never say that the world is wide—
The rill in its banks is less closely pent;
It is thou who art shoreless on every side,
And thy width will not let thee inclose content."

As the verse ceased Kenelm lifted his head. But the banks of the brook were so curving and so clothed with brushwood, that for some minutes the singer was invisible. At last the boughs before him were put aside, and within a few paces of himself paused the man to whom he had commended the praises of a beefsteak, instead of those which minstrelsy, in its immemorial error, dedicates to love.

"Sir," said Kenelm, half rising, "well met once more. Have you ever listened to the cuckoo?"

"Sir," answered the minstrel, "have you ever felt the presence of the summer?"

"Permit me to shake hands with you. I admire the question by which you have countermet and rebuked my own. If you are not in a hurry, will you sit down and let us talk?"

The minstrel inclined his head and seated himself. His dog—now emerged from the brushwood—gravely approached Kenelm, who with greater gravity regarded him; then, wagging his tail, reposed on his haunches, intent with ear erect on a stir in the neighbouring reeds, evidently considering whether it was caused by a fish or a water-rat.

"I asked you, sir, if you had ever listened to the cuckoo—from no irrelevant curiosity;—for often on summer days, when one is talking with one's self—and, of course, puzzling one's self—a voice breaks out, as it were from the heart of Nature, so far is it and yet so near; and it says something very quieting, very musical, so that one is tempted inconsiderately and foolishly to exclaim, 'Nature replies to me.' The cuckoo has served me that trick pretty often. Your song is a better answer to a man's self-questionings than he can ever get from a cuckoo."

"I doubt that," said the minstrel. "Song, at the best, is but the echo of some voice from the heart of Nature. And if the cuckoo's note seemed to you such a voice, it was an answer to your questionings perhaps more simply truthful than man can utter, if you had rightly construed the language."

"My good friend," answered Kenelm, "what you say sounds very prettily; and it contains a sentiment which has been amplified by certain critics into that measureless domain of dunderheads which is vulgarly called BOSH. But though Nature is never silent, though she abuses the privilege of her age in being tediously gossiping and garrulous—Nature never replies to our questions—she can't understand an argument—she has never read Mr. Mill's work on Logic. In fact, as it is truly said by a great philosopher, 'Nature has no mind.' Every man who addresses her is compelled to force upon her for a moment the loan of his own mind. And if she answers a question which his own mind puts to her, it is only by such a reply as his own mind teaches to her parrot-like lips. And as

every man has a different mind, so every man gets a different answer. Nature is a lying old humbug."

The minstrel laughed merrily; and his laugh was as sweet as his chant.

"Poets would have a great deal to unlearn if they are to look upon Nature in that light."

"Bad poets would, and so much the better for them and their readers."

"Are not good poets students of Nature?"

"Students of Nature, certainly—as surgeons study anatomy by dissecting a dead body. But the good poet, like the good surgeon, is the man who considers that study merely as the necessary A B C, and not as the all-in-all essential to skill in his practice. I do not give the fame of a good surgeon to a man who fills a book with details, more or less accurate, of fibres, and nerves, and muscles; and I don't give the fame of a good poet to a man who makes an inventory of the Rhine or the Vale of Gloucester. The good surgeon and the good poet are they who understand the living man. What is that poetry of drama which Aristotle justly ranks as the highest? Is it not a poetry in which description of inanimate Nature must of necessity be very brief and general; in which even the external form of man is so indifferent a consideration that it will vary with each actor who performs the part? A Hamlet may be fair or dark. A Macbeth may be short or tall. The merit of dramatic poetry consists in the substituting for what is commonly called Nature (*viz.*, external and material Nature), creatures intellectual, emotional, but so purely immaterial that they may be said to be all mind and soul, accepting the temporary loans of any such bodies at hand as actors may offer, in order to be made palpable and visible to the audience, but needing no such bodies to be palpable and visible to readers. The highest kind of poetry is therefore that which has least to do with external Nature. But every grade has its merit more or less genuinely great, according as it instils into Nature that which is not there—the reason and the soul of man."

"I am not much disposed," said the minstrel, "to acknowledge any one form of poetry to be practically higher than

another—that is, so far as to elevate the poet who cultivates what you call the highest with some success, above the rank of the poet who cultivates what you call a very inferior school with a success much more triumphant. In theory, dramatic poetry may be higher than lyric, and *Venice Preserved* is a very successful drama; but I think Burns a greater poet than Otway.”

“Possibly he may be; but I know of no lyrical poet, at least among the moderns, who treats less of Nature as the mere outward form of things, or more passionately animates her framework with his own human heart, than does Robert Burns. Do you suppose when a Greek, in some perplexity of reason or conscience, addressed a question to the oracular oak-leaves of Dodona, that the oak-leaves answered him? Don’t you rather believe that the question suggested by his mind was answered by the mind of his fellow-man, the priest, who made the oak-leaves the mere vehicle of communication, as you and I might make such vehicle in a sheet of writing-paper? Is not the history of superstition a chronicle of the follies of man in attempting to get answers from external Nature?”

“But,” said the minstrel, “have I not somewhere heard or read that the experiments of Science are the answers made by Nature to the questions put to her by man?”

“They are the answers which his own mind suggests to her—nothing more. His mind studies the laws of matter, and in that study makes experiments on matter; out of those experiments his mind, according to its previous knowledge or natural acuteness, arrives at its own deductions, and hence arise the sciences of mechanics and chemistry, &c. But the matter itself gives no answer; the answer varies according to the mind that puts the question, and the progress of science consists in the perpetual correction of the errors and falsehoods which preceding minds conceived to be the correct answers they received from Nature. It is the supernatural within us—viz., Mind—which can alone guess, at the mechanism of the natural—viz., Matter. A stone cannot question a stone.”

The minstrel made no reply. And there was a long silence, broken but by the hum of the insects, the ripple of onward waves, and the sigh of the wind through reeds.

CHAPTER XVII.

SAID Kenelm, at last breaking silence—

“ ‘ Rapiamus, amici,
Occasionem de dic, dumque virent genua,
Et decet, obducta solvatur fronte senectus ! ’ ”

“ Is not that quotation from Horace ? ” asked the minstrel.

“ Yes ; and I made it insidiously, in order to see if you had not acquired what is called a classical education.”

“ I might have received such education, if my tastes and my destinies had not withdrawn me in boyhood from studies of which I did not then comprehend the full value. But I did pick up a smattering of Latin at school ; and from time to time since I left school, I have endeavoured to gain some little knowledge of the most popular Latin poets—chiefly, I own to my shame, by the help of literal English translations.”

“ As a poet yourself, I am not sure that it would be an advantage to know a dead language so well that its forms and modes of thought ran, though perhaps unconsciously, into those of the living one in which you compose. Horace might have been a still better poet if he had not known Greek better than you know Latin.”

“ It is at least courteous in you to say so,” answered the singer, with a pleased smile.

“ You would be still more courteous,” said Kenelm, “ if you would pardon an impertinent question, and tell me whether it is for a wager that you wander through the land, Homer-like, as a wandering minstrel, and allow that intelligent quadruped, your companion, to carry a tray in his mouth for the reception of pennies ? ”

“ No, it is not for a wager ; it is a whim of mine, which I fancy, from the tone of your conversation, you could understand, being, apparently, somewhat whimsical yourself.”

“ So far as whim goes, be assured of my sympathy.”

“ Well, then, though I follow a calling by the exercise of which I secure a modest income—my passion is verse. If the

seasons were always summer, and life were always youth, I should like to pass through the world singing. But I have never ventured to publish any verses of mine. If they fell still-born it would give me more pain than such wounds to vanity ought to give to a bearded man; and if they were assailed or ridiculed, it might seriously injure me in my practical vocation. That last consideration, were I quite alone in the world, might not much weigh on me; but there are others for whose sake I should like to make fortune and preserve station. Many years ago—it was in Germany—I fell in with a German student who was very poor, and who did make money by wandering about the country with lute and song. He has since become a poet of no mean popularity, and he has told me that he is sure he found the secret of that popularity in habitually consulting popular tastes during his roving apprenticeship to song. His example strongly impressed me. So I began this experiment; and for several years my summers have been all partly spent in this way. I am only known, as I think I told you before, in the rounds I take as ‘The Wandering Minstrel,’ I receive the trifling moneys that are bestowed on me as proofs of a certain merit. I should not be paid by poor people if I did not please; and the songs which please them best are generally those I love best myself. For the rest, my time is not thrown away—not only as regards bodily health, but healthfulness of mind—all the current of one’s ideas becomes so freshened by months of playful exercise and varied adventure.”

“Yes, the adventure is varied enough,” said Kenelm, somewhat ruefully; for he felt, in shifting his posture, a sharp twinge of his bruised muscles. “But don’t you find those mischief-makers, the women, always mix themselves up with adventure?”

“Bless them! of course,” said the minstrel, with a ringing laugh. “In life, as on the stage, the petticoat interest is always the strongest.”

“I don’t agree with you there,” said Kenelm, drily. “And you seem to me to utter a claptrap beneath the rank of your understanding. However, this warm weather indisposes one to disputation; and I own that a petticoat, provided it be red, is not without the interest of colour in a picture.”

"Well, young gentleman," said the minstrel, rising, "the day is wearing on, and I must wish you good-bye; probably, if you were to ramble about the country as I do, you would see too many pretty girls not to teach you the strength of petticoat interest—not in pictures alone; and should I meet you again I may find you writing love-verses yourself."

"After a conjecture so unwarrantable, I part company with you less reluctantly than I otherwise might do. But I hope we shall meet again."

"Your wish flatters me much, but, if we do, pray respect the confidence I have placed in you, and regard my wandering minstrelsy and my dog's tray as sacred secrets. Should we not so meet, it is but a prudent reserve on my part if I do not give you my right name and address."

"There you show the cautious common-sense which belongs rarely to lovers of verse and petticoat interest. What have you done with your guitar?"

"I do not pace the roads with that instrument: it is forwarded to me from town to town under a borrowed name, together with other raiment than this, should I have cause to drop my character of wandering minstrel."

The two men here exchanged a cordial shake of the hand. And as the minstrel went his way along the river-side, his voice in chanting seemed to lend to the wavelets a livelier murmur, to the reeds a less plaintive sigh.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN his room, solitary and brooding, sat the defeated hero of a hundred fights. It was now twilight; but the shutters had been partially closed all day, in order to exclude the sun, which had never before been unwelcome to Tom Bowles, and they still remained so, making the twilight doubly twilight, till the harvest moon, rising early, shot its ray through the crevice, and forced a silvery track amid the shadows of the floor.

The man's head drooped on his breast, his strong hands rested listlessly on his knees; his attitude was that of utter despondency and prostration. But in the expression of his face there were the signs of some dangerous and restless thought which belied not the gloom but the stillness of the posture. His brow, which was habitually open and frank, in its defying aggressive boldness, was now contracted into deep furrows, and lowered darkly over his downcast, half-closed eyes. His lips were so tightly compressed that the face lost its roundness, and the massive bone of the jaw stood out hard and salient. Now and then, indeed, the lips opened, giving vent to a deep, impatient sigh, but they reclosed as quickly as they had parted. It was one of those crises in life which find all the elements that make up a man's former self in lawless anarchy; in which the Evil One seems to enter and direct the storm; in which a rude untutored mind, never before harbouring a thought of crime, sees the crime start up from an abyss, feels it to be an enemy, yet yields to it as a fate. So that when, at the last, some wretch, sentenced to the gibbet, shudderingly looks back to the moment 'that trembled between two worlds'—the world of the man guiltless, the world of the man guilty—he says to the holy, highly educated, rational, passionless priest who confesses him and calls him 'brother,' "The devil put it into my head."

At that moment the door opened; at its threshold there stood the man's mother—whom he had never allowed to influence his conduct, though he loved her well in his rough way—and the hated fellow-man whom he longed to see dead at his feet. The door reclosed, the mother was gone, without a word, for her tears choked her; the fellow-man was alone with him. Tom Bowles looked up, recognised his visitor, cleared his brow, and rubbed his mighty hands.

CHAPTER XIX.

KENELM CHILLINGLY drew a chair close to his antagonist's, and silently laid a hand on his.

Tom Bowles took up the hand in both his own, turned it curiously towards the moonlight, gazed at it, poised it, then with a sound between groan and laugh tossed it away as a thing hostile but trivial, rose and locked the door, came back to his seat and said bluffly—

“What do you want with me now?”

“I want to ask you a favour.”

“Favour?”

“The greatest which man can ask from man—friendship. You see, my dear Tom,” continued Kenelm, making himself quite at home—throwing his arm over the back of Tom's chair, and stretching his legs comfortably as one does by one's own fireside; “you see, my dear Tom, that men like us—young, single, not on the whole bad-looking as men go—can find sweethearts in plenty. If one does not like us, another will; sweethearts are sown everywhere like nettles and thistles. But the rarest thing in life is a friend. Now, tell me frankly, in the course of your wanderings did you ever come into a village where you could not have got a sweetheart if you had asked for one; and if, having got a sweetheart, you had lost her, do you think you would have had any difficulty in finding another? But have you such a thing in the world, beyond the pale of your own family, as a true friend—a man friend; and supposing that you had such a friend—a friend who would stand by you through thick and thin—who would tell you your faults to your face, and praise you for your good qualities behind your back—who would do all he could to save you from a danger, and all he could to get you out of one,—supposing you had such a friend, and lost him, do you believe that if you lived to the age of Methuselah you could find another? You don't answer me; you are silent. Well, Tom, I ask you to be such a friend to me, and I will be such a friend to you.”

Tom was so thoroughly 'taken aback' by this address that he remained dumbfounded. But he felt as if the clouds in his soul were breaking, and a ray of sunlight were forcing its way through the sullen darkness. At length, however, the receding rage within him returned, though with vacillating step, and he growled between his teeth—

"A pretty friend indeed, robbing me of my girl! Go along with you!"

"She was not your girl any more than she was or ever can be mine."

"What, you ben't after her?"

"Certainly not; I am going to Luscombe, and I ask you to come with me. Do you think I am going to leave you here?"

"What is it to you?"

"Everything. Providence has permitted me to save you from the most lifelong of all sorrows. For—think! Can any sorrow be more lasting than had been yours if you had attained your wish; if you had forced or frightened a woman to be your partner till death do part—you loving her, she loathing you; you conscious, night and day, that your very love had insured her misery, and that misery haunting you like a ghost!—that sorrow I have saved you. May Providence permit me to complete my work, and save you also from the most irredeemable of all crimes! Look into your soul, then recall the thoughts which all day long, and not least at the moment I crossed this threshold, were rising up, making reason dumb and conscience blind, and then lay your hand on your heart and say—'I am guiltless of a dream of murder.'"

The wretched man sprang up erect, menacing, and, meeting Kenelm's calm, steadfast, pitying gaze, dropped no less suddenly—dropped on the floor, covered his face with his hands, and a great cry came forth between sob and howl.

"Brother," said Kenelm, kneeling beside him, and twining his arm round the man's heaving breast, "it is over now; with that cry the demon that maddened you has fled for ever."

CHAPTER XX.

WHEN, some time after, Kenelm quitted the room and joined Mrs. Bowles below, he said cheerily, "All right; Tom and I are sworn friends. We are going together to Luscombe the day after to-morrow—Sunday; just write a line to his uncle to prepare him for Tom's visit and send thither his clothes, as we shall walk, and steal forth unobserved betimes in the morning. Now go up and talk to him; he wants a mother's soothing and petting. He is a noble fellow at heart, and we shall be all proud of him some day or other."

As he walked towards the farmhouse, Kenelm encountered Mr. Lethbridge, who said—"I have come from Mr. Saunderson's, where I went in search of you. There is an unexpected hitch in the negotiation for Mrs. Bawtrey's shop. After seeing you this morning I fell in with Mr. Travers's bailiff, and he tells me that her lease does not give her the power to sublet without the Squire's consent; and that as the premises were originally let on very low terms to a favoured and responsible tenant, Mr. Travers cannot be expected to sanction the transfer of the lease to a poor basket-maker; in fact, though he will accept Mrs. Bawtrey's resignation, it must be in favour of an applicant whom he desires to oblige. On hearing this, I rode over to the Park and saw Mr. Travers himself. But he was obdurate to my pleadings. All I could get him to say was—'Let the stranger who interests himself in the matter come and talk to me. I should like to see the man who thrashed that brute Tom Bowles; if he got the better of him perhaps he may get the better of me. Bring him with you to my harvest supper to-morrow evening.' Now, will you come?"

"Nay," said Kenelm, reluctantly; "but if he only asks me in order to gratify a very vulgar curiosity, I don't think I have much chance of serving Will Somers. What do you say?"

"The Squire is a good man of business, and though no one can call him unjust or grasping, still he is very little touched by sentiment; and we must own that a sickly cripple like

poor Will is not a very eligible tenant. If, therefore, it depended only on your chance with the Squire, I should not be very sanguine. But we have an ally in his daughter. She is very fond of Jessie Wiles, and she has shown great kindness to Will. In fact, a sweeter, more benevolent, sympathising nature than that of Cecilia Travers does not exist. She has great influence with her father, and through her you may win him."

"I particularly dislike having anything to do with women," said Kenelm, churlishly "Parsons are accustomed to get round them. Surely, my dear sir, you are more fit for that work than I am."

"Permit me humbly to doubt that proposition; one doesn't get very quickly round the women when one carries the weight of years on one's back. But whenever you want the aid of a parson to bring your own wooing to a happy conclusion, I shall be happy, in my special capacity of parson, to perform the ceremony required."

"*Dii meliora!*" said Kenelm, gravely. "Some ills are too serious to be approached even in joke. As for Miss Travers, the moment you call her benevolent you inspire me with horror. I know too well what a benevolent girl is—officious, restless, fidgety, with a snub nose, and her pocket full of tracts. I will not go to the harvest-supper."

"Hist!" said the parson, softly. They were now passing the cottage of Mrs. Somers; and while Kenelm was haranguing against benevolent girls, Mr. Lethbridge had paused before it, and was furtively looking in at the window. "Hist! and come here,—gently."

Kenelm obeyed, and looked in through the window. Will was seated—Jessie Wiles had nestled herself at his feet, and was holding his hand in both hers, looking up into his face. Her profile alone was seen, but its expression was unutterably soft and tender. His face, bent downwards towards her, wore a mournful expression; nay—the tears were rolling silently down his cheeks. Kenelm listened and heard her say, "Don't talk so, Will, you break my heart; it is I who am not worthy of you."

"Parson," said Kenelm, as they walked on, "I must go to that confounded harvest-supper. I begin to think there is something true in the venerable platitude about love in a cottage. And Will Somers must be married in haste, in order to repent at leisure."

"I don't see why a man should repent having married a good girl whom he loves."

"You don't? Answer me candidly. Did you ever meet a man who repented having married?"

"Of course I have; very often."

"Well, think again, and answer as candidly. Did you ever meet a man who repented not having married?"

The parson mused, and was silent.

"Sir," said Kenelm, "your reticence proves your honesty, and I respect it." So saying, he bounded off, and left the parson crying out wildly, "But—but——"

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. SAUNDERSON and Kenelm sat in the arbour; the former sipping his grog and smoking his pipe—the latter looking forth into the summer night skies with an earnest yet abstracted gaze, as if he were trying to count the stars in the Milky Way.

"Ha!" said Mr. Saunderson, who was concluding an argument; "you see it now, don't you?"

"I—not a bit of it. You tell me that your grandfather was a farmer, and your father was a farmer, and that you have been a farmer for thirty years; and from these premises you deduce the illogical and irrational conclusion that therefore your son must be a farmer."

"Young man, you may think yourself very knowing 'cause you have been at the 'varsity, and swept away a headful of book-learning."

"Stop," quoth Kenelm. "You grant that a university is learned."

"Well, I suppose so."

"But how could it be learned if those who quitted it brought the learning away? We leave it all behind us in the care of the tutors. But I know what you were going to say—that it is not because I had read more books than you have that I was to give myself airs and pretend to have more knowledge of life than a man of your years and experience. Agreed, as a general rule. But does not every doctor, however wise and skilful, prefer taking another doctor's opinion about himself, even though that other doctor has just started in practice? And, seeing that doctors, taking them as a body, are monstrous clever fellows, is not the example they set us worth following? Does it not prove that no man, however wise, is a good judge of his own case? Now, your son's case is really your case—you see it through the medium of your likings and dislikings—and insist upon forcing a square peg into a round hole, because in a round hole you, being a round peg, feel tight and comfortable. Now I call that irrational."

"I don't see why my son has any right to fancy himself a square peg," said the farmer, doggedly, "when his father, and his grandfather, and his great-grandfather, have been round pegs; and it is agin' nature for any creature not to take after its own kind. A dog is a pointer or a sheep-dog according as its forebears were pointers or sheep-dogs. There," cried the farmer, triumphantly, shaking the ashes out of his pipe. "I think I have posed you, young master!"

"No; for you have taken it for granted that the breeds have not been crossed. But suppose that a sheep-dog has married a pointer, are you sure that his son will not be more of a pointer than a sheep-dog?"

Mr. Saunderson arrested himself in the task of refilling his pipe, and scratched his head.

"You see," continued Kenelm, "that you have crossed the breed. You married a tradesman's daughter, and I dare say her grandfather and great-grandfather were tradesmen too. Now, most sons take after their mothers, and therefore Mr. Saunderson, junior, takes after his kind on the distaff side, and

comes into the world a square peg, which can only be tight and comfortable in a square hole. It is no use arguing, farmer: your boy must go to his uncle; and there's an end of the matter."

"By goles!" said the farmer, "you seem to think you can talk me out of my senses."

"No; but I think if you had your own way you would talk your son into the workhouse."

"What! by sticking to the land like his father before him? Let a man stick by the land, and the land will stick by him."

"Let a man stick in the mud, and the mud will stick to him. You put your heart in your farm, and your son would only put his foot into it. Courage! Don't you see that Time is a whirligig, and all things come round? Every day somebody leaves the land and goes off into trade. By and by he grows rich, and then his great desire is to get back to the land again. He left it the son of a farmer: he returns to it as a squire. Your son, when he gets to be fifty, will invest his savings in acres, and have tenants of his own. Lord, how he will lay down the law to them! I would not advise you to take a farm under him."

"Catch me at it!" said the farmer. "He would turn all the contents of the 'pothecary's shop into my fallows, and call it 'progress.'"

"Let him physic the fallows when he has farms of his own: keep yours out of his chemical clutches. Come, I shall tell him to pack up and be off to his uncle's next week."

"Well, well," said the farmer, in a resigned tone,—“a wilful man must e'en have his way."

"And the best thing a sensible man can do is not to cross it. Mr. Saunderson, give me your honest hand. You are one of those men who put the sons of good fathers in mind of their own; and I think of mine when I say 'God bless you!'"

Quitting the farmer, Kenelm re-entered the house, and sought Mr. Saunderson junior in his own room. He found that young gentleman still up, and reading an eloquent tract

on the Emancipation of the Human Race from all Tyrannical Control—Political, Social, Ecclesiastical, and Domestic.

The lad looked up sulkily, and said, on encountering Kenelm's melancholic visage, "Ah! I see you have talked with the old governor, and he'll not hear of it."

"In the first place," answered Kenelm, "since you value yourself on a superior education, allow me to advise you to study the English language, as the forms of it are maintained by the elder authors—whom, in spite of an Age of Progress, men of superior education esteem. No one who has gone through that study—no one, indeed, who has studied the Ten Commandments in the vernacular, commits the mistake of supposing that 'the old governor' is a synonymous expression for 'father.' In the second place, since you pretend to the superior enlightenment which results from a superior education, learn to know better your own self before you set up as a teacher of mankind. Excuse the liberty I take, as your sincere well-wisher, when I tell you that you are at present a conceited fool—in short, that which makes one boy call another 'an ass.' But when one has a poor head he may redeem the average balance of humanity by increasing the wealth of the heart. Try and increase yours. Your father consents to your choice of your lot at the sacrifice of all his own inclinations. This is a sore trial to a father's pride, a father's affection; and few fathers make such sacrifices with a good grace. I have thus kept my promise to you, and enforced your wishes on Mr. Saunderson's judgment, because I am sure you would have been a very bad farmer. It now remains for you to show that you can be a very good tradesman. You are bound in honour to me and to your father to try your best to be so; and meanwhile leave the task of upsetting the world to those who have no shop in it, which would go crash in the general tumble. And so good-night to you."

To these admonitory words, *sacro digna silentio*, Saunderson junior listened with a dropping jaw and fascinated staring eyes. He felt like an infant to whom the nurse has given a hasty shake, and who is too stupefied by that operation to know whether he is hurt or not.

A minute after Kenelm had quitted the room he reappeared at the door, and said in a conciliatory whisper, "Don't take it to heart that I called you a conceited fool and an ass. These terms are no doubt just as applicable to myself. But there is a more conceited fool and a greater ass than either of us, and that is, the Age in which we have the misfortune to be born—an Age of Progress, Mr. Saunderson, junior—an Age of Prigs!"

BOOK III.



CHAPTER I.

IF there were a woman in the world who might be formed and fitted to reconcile Kenelm Chillingly to the sweet troubles of love and the pleasant bickerings of wedded life, one might reasonably suppose that that woman could be found in Cecilia Travers. An only daughter and losing her mother in childhood, she had been raised to the mistress-ship of a household at an age in which most girls are still putting their dolls to bed ; and thus had early acquired that sense of responsibility accompanied with the habits of self-reliance, which seldom fails to give a certain nobility to character ; though almost as often, in the case of women, it steals away the tender gentleness which constitutes the charm of their sex.

It had not done so in the instance of Cecilia Travers, because she was so womanlike that even the exercise of power could not make her manlike. There was in the depth of her nature such an instinct of sweetness, that wherever her mind toiled and wandered it gathered and hoarded honey.

She had one advantage over most girls in the same rank of life—she had not been taught to fritter away such capacities for culture as Providence gave her in the sterile nothingnesses which are called feminine accomplishments. She did not paint figures out of drawing in meagre water-colours ; she had not devoted years of her life to the inflicting on polite audiences the boredom of Italian bravuras, which they could hear better

sung by a third-rate professional singer in a metropolitan music-hall. I am afraid she had no other female accomplishments than those by which the sempstress or embroideress earns her daily bread. That sort of work she loved, and she did it deftly.

But if she had not been profitlessly plagued by masters, Cecilia Travers had been singularly favoured by her father's choice of a teacher,—no great merit in him either. He had a prejudice against professional governesses, and it chanced that among his own family connections was a certain Mrs. Champion, a lady of some literary distinction, whose husband had held a high situation in one of our public offices, and living, much to his satisfaction, up to a very handsome income, had died, much to the astonishment of others, without leaving a farthing behind him.

Fortunately, there were no children to provide for. A small government pension was allotted to the widow; and as her husband's house had been made by her one of the pleasantest in London, she was popular enough to be invited by numerous friends to their country seats—among others, by Mr. Travers. She came intending to stay a fortnight. At the end of that time she had grown so attached to Cecilia, and Cecilia to her, and her presence had become so pleasant and so useful to her host, that the Squire entreated her to stay and undertake the education of his daughter. Mrs. Champion, after some hesitation, gratefully consented; and thus Cecilia, from the age of eight to her present age of nineteen, had the inestimable advantage of living in constant companionship with a woman of richly-cultivated mind, accustomed to hear the best criticisms on the best books, and adding to no small accomplishment in literature the refinement of manners and that sort of prudent judgment which result from habitual intercourse with an intellectual and gracefully world-wise circle of society; so that Cecilia herself, without being at all blue or pedantic, became one of those rare young women with whom a well-educated man can converse on equal terms—from whom he gains as much as he can impart to her; while a man who, not caring much about books, is still gentleman enough to value good breeding, felt a relief in exchanging the forms of his native language without the

shock of hearing that a bishop was "a swell," or a croquet-party "awfully jolly."

In a word, Cecilia was one of those women whom Heaven forms for man's helpmate—who, if he were born to rank and wealth, would, as his partner, reflect on them a new dignity, and add to their enjoyment by bringing forth their duties—who, not less if the husband she chose were poor and struggling, would encourage, sustain, and soothe him, take her own share of his burdens, and temper the bitterness of life with the all-recompensing sweetness of her smile.

Little, indeed, as yet had she ever thought of love or of lovers. She had not even formed to herself any of those ideals which float before the eyes of most girls when they enter their teens. But of two things she felt inly convinced—first, that she could never wed where she did not love; and secondly, that where she did love it would be for life.

And now I close this sketch with a picture of the girl herself. She has just come into her room from inspecting the preparations for the evening entertainment which her father is to give to his tenants and rural neighbours.

She has thrown aside her straw hat, and put down the large basket which she has emptied of flowers. She pauses before the glass, smoothing back the ruffled bands of her hair—hair of a dark, soft chestnut, silky and luxuriant—never polluted, and never, so long as she lives, to be polluted by auricomous cosmetics:—far from that delicate darkness, every tint of the colours traditionally dedicated to the locks of Judas.

Her complexion, usually of that soft bloom which inclines to paleness, is now heightened into glow by exercise and sunlight. The features are small and feminine, the eyes dark with long lashes, the mouth singularly beautiful, with a dimple on either side, and parted now in a half-smile at some pleasant recollection, giving a glimpse of small teeth glistening as pearls. But the peculiar charm of her face is in an expression of serene happiness, that sort of happiness which seems as if it had never been interrupted by a sorrow, had never been troubled by a sin—that holy kind of happiness which belongs to innocence, the light reflected from a heart and conscience alike at peace.

CHAPTER II.

IT was a lovely summer evening for the Squire's rural entertainment. Mr. Travers had some guests staying with him: they had dined early for the occasion, and were now grouped with their host a little before six o'clock on the lawn. The house was of irregular architecture, altered or added to at various periods from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Victoria: at one end, the oldest part a gable with mullion windows; at the other, the newest part, a flat-roofed wing, with modern sashes opening to the ground, the intermediate part much hidden by a verandah covered with creepers in full bloom. The lawn was a spacious table-land facing the west, and backed by a green and gentle hill, crowned with the ruins of an ancient priory. On one side of the lawn stretched a flower-garden and pleasure-ground, originally planned by Repton; on the opposite angles of the sward were placed two large marquees—one for dancing, the other for supper. Towards the south the view was left open, and commanded the prospect of an old English park, not of the stateliest character,—not intersected with ancient avenues, nor clothed with profitless fern as lairs for deer—but the park of a careful agriculturist, uniting profit with show, the sward duly drained and nourished, fit to fatten bullocks in an incredibly short time, and somewhat spoilt to the eye by subdivisions of wire fence. Mr. Travers was renowned for skilful husbandry, and the general management of land to the best advantage. He had come into the estate while still in childhood, and thus enjoyed the accumulations of a long minority. He had entered the Guards at the age of eighteen, and having more command of money than most of his contemporaries, though they might be of higher rank and the sons of richer men, he had been much courted and much plundered. At the age of twenty-five he found himself one of the leaders of fashion, renowned chiefly for reckless daring wherever honour could be plucked out of the nettle danger; a steeplechaser, whose exploits made a quiet

man's hair stand on end ; a rider across country, taking leaps which a more cautious huntsman carefully avoided. Known at Paris as well as in London, he had been admired by ladies whose smiles had cost him duels, the marks of which still remained in glorious scars on his person. No man ever seemed more likely to come to direst grief before attaining the age of thirty, for at twenty-seven all the accumulations of his minority were gone ; and his estate, which, when he came of age, was scarcely three thousand a-year, but entirely at his own disposal, was mortgaged up to its eyes.

His friends began to shake their heads and call him "poor fellow ;" but with all his wild faults, Leopold Travers had been wholly pure from the two vices out of which a man does not often redeem himself. He had never drunk and he had never gambled. His nerves were not broken, his brain was not besotted. There was plenty of health in him yet, mind and body. At the critical period of his life he married for love, and his choice was a most felicitous one. The lady had no fortune ; but, though handsome and high-born she had no taste for extravagance, and no desire for other society than that of the man she loved. So when he said, "Let us settle in the country and try our best to live on a few hundreds, lay by, and keep the old place out of the market," she consented with a joyful heart : and marvel it was to all how this wild Leopold Travers did settle down ; did take to cultivating his home farm with his men from sunrise to sunset like a common tenant-farmer ; did contrive to pay the interest on the mortgages, and keep his head above water. After some years of pupilage in this school of thrift, during which his habits became formed, and his whole character braced, Leopold Travers suddenly found himself again rich, through the wife whom he had so prudently married without other dower than her love and her virtues. Her only brother, Lord Eagleton, a Scotch peer, had been engaged in marriage to a young lady, considered to be a rare prize in the lottery of wedlock. The marriage was broken off under very disastrous circumstances ; but the young Lord, good-looking and agreeable, was naturally expected to seek speedy consolation in some other alliance. Nevertheless he did not do so ;—he became a

confirmed invalid, and died single, leaving to his sister all in his power to save from the distant kinsman who succeeded to his lands and title,—a goodly sum, which not only sufficed to pay off the mortgages on Neesdale Park but bestowed on its owner a surplus which the practical knowledge of country life that he had acquired enabled him to devote with extraordinary profit to the general improvement of his estate. He replaced tumble-down old farm buildings with new constructions on the most approved principles; bought or pensioned off certain slovenly incompetent tenants; threw sundry petty holdings into large farms suited to the buildings he constructed; purchased here and there small bits of land, commodious to the farms they adjoined, and completing the integrity of his ring-fence; stubbed up profitless woods which diminished the value of neighbouring arables, by obstructing sun and air, and harbouring legions of rabbits; and then seeking tenants of enterprise and capital, more than doubled his original yearly rental, and perhaps more than tripled the market value of his property. Simultaneously with this acquisition of fortune, he emerged from the inhospitable and unsocial obscurity which his previous poverty had compelled, took an active part in county business, proved himself an excellent speaker at public meetings, subscribed liberally to the hunt, and occasionally joined in it—a less bold but a wiser rider than of yore. In short, as Themistocles boasted that he could make a small state great, so Leopold Travers might boast with equal truth that, by his energies, his judgment, and the weight of his personal character, he had made the owner of a property which had been at his accession to it of third-rate rank in the county, a personage so considerable that no knight of the shire against whom he declared could have been elected, and if he had determined to stand himself he would have been chosen free of expense.

But he said, on being solicited to become a candidate, "When a man once gives himself up to the care and improvement of a landed estate, he has no time and no heart for anything else. An estate is an income or a kingdom, according as the owner chooses to take it. I take it as a kingdom, and I cannot be *roi fainéant*, with a steward for *maire du palais*. A king does not go into the House of Commons."

Three years after this rise in the social ladder, Mrs. Travers was seized with congestion of the lungs followed by pleurisy, and died after less than a week's illness. Leopold never wholly recovered her loss. Though still young, and always handsome, the idea of another wife, the love of another woman, were notions which he dismissed from his mind with a quiet scorn. He was too masculine a creature to parade grief. For some weeks, indeed, he shut himself up in his own room, so rigidly secluded that he would not see even his daughter. But one morning he appeared in his fields as usual, and from that day resumed his old habits, and gradually renewed that cordial interchange of hospitalities which had popularly distinguished him since his accession to wealth. Still people felt that the man was changed; he was more taciturn, more grave: if always just in his dealings, he took the harder side of justice, where in his wife's time he had taken the gentler. Perhaps, to a man of strong will, the habitual intercourse with an amiable woman is essential for those occasions in which Will best proves the fineness of its temper by the facility with which it can be bent.

It may be said that Leopold Travers might have found such intercourse in the intimate companionship of his own daughter. But she was a mere child when his wife died, and she grew up to womanhood too insensibly for him to note the change. Besides, where a man has found a wife his all-in-all, a daughter can never supply her place. The very reverence due to children precludes unrestrained confidence; and there is not that sense of permanent fellowship in a daughter which a man has in a wife,—any day a stranger may appear and carry her off from him. At all events Leopold did not own in Cecilia the softening influence to which he had yielded in her mother. He was fond of her, proud of her, indulgent to her; but the indulgence had its set limits. Whatever she asked solely for herself he granted; whatever she wished for matters under feminine control—the domestic household, the parish school, the alms-receiving poor—obtained his gentlest consideration. But when she had been solicited by some offending out-of-door dependant, or some petty defaulting tenant to use her good offices in favour of the culprit, Mr. Travers checked her interference by a firm "No,"

though uttered in a mild accent; and accompanied with a masculine aphorism to the effect that "there would be no such things as strict justice and disciplined order in the world if a man yielded to a woman's pleadings in any matter of business between man and man." From this it will be seen that Mr. Lethbridge had overrated the value of Cecilia's alliance in the negotiation respecting Mrs. Bawtrey's premium and shop.

CHAPTER III.

IF, having just perused what has thus been written on the biographical antecedents and mental characteristics of Leopold Travers, you, my dear reader, were to be personally presented to that gentleman as he now stands, the central figure of the group gathered round him, on his terrace, you would probably be surprised,—nay, I have no doubt you would say to yourself, "Not at all the sort of man I expected." In that slender form, somewhat below the middle height; in that fair countenance which still, at the age of forty-eight, retains a delicacy of feature and of colouring which is of almost womanlike beauty, and, from the quiet placidity of its expression, conveys at first glance the notion of almost womanlike mildness,—it would be difficult to recognise a man who in youth had been renowned for reckless daring, in maturer years more honourably distinguished for steadfast prudence and determined purpose, and who, alike in faults or in merits, was as emphatically masculine as a biped in trousers can possibly be.

Mr. Travers is listening to a young man of about two-and-twenty, the eldest son of the richest nobleman of the county, and who intends to start for the representation of the shire at the next general election, which is close at hand. The Hon. George Belvoir is tall, inclined to be stout, and will look well on the hustings. He has had those pains taken with his education which an English peer generally does take with the son intended to succeed to the representation of an honourable

name and the responsibilities of high station. If eldest sons do not often make as great a figure in the world as their younger brothers, it is not because their minds are less cultivated, but because they have less motive power for action. George Belvoir was well read, especially in that sort of reading which befits a future senator—history, statistics, political economy, so far as that dismal science is compatible with the agricultural interest. He was also well-principled, had a strong sense of discipline and duty, was prepared in politics firmly to uphold as right whatever was proposed by his own party, and to reject as wrong whatever was proposed by the other. At present he was rather loud and noisy in the assertion of his opinions,—young men fresh from the university generally are. It was the secret wish of Mr. Travers that George Belvoir should become his son-in-law—less because of his rank and wealth (though such advantages were not of a nature to be despised by a practical man like Leopold Travers), than on account of those qualities in his personal character which were likely to render him an excellent husband.

Seated on wire benches, just without the verandah, but shaded by its fragrant festoons, were Mrs. Campion and three ladies, the wives of neighbouring squires. Cecilia stood a little apart from them, bending over a long-backed Skye terrier, whom she was teaching to stand on his hind legs.

But see, the company are arriving! How suddenly that green space, ten minutes ago so solitary, has become animated and populous!

Indeed the park now presented a very lively appearance: vans, carts, and farmers' chaises were seen in crowded procession along the winding road; foot-passengers were swarming towards the house in all directions. The herds and flocks in the various inclosures stopped grazing to stare at the unwonted invaders of their pasture; yet the orderly nature of their host imparted a respect for order to his ruder visitors; not even a turbulent boy attempted to scale the fences, or creep through their wires; all threaded the narrow turnstiles which gave egress from one subdivision of the sward to another.

Mr. Travers turned to George Belvoir—"I see old farmer

Steen's yellow gig. Mind how you talk to him, George. He is full of whims and crotchets, and if you once brush his feathers the wrong way he will be as vindictive as a parrot. But he is the man who must second you at the nomination. No other tenant-farmer carries the same weight with his class."

"I suppose," said George, "that if Mr. Steen is the best man to second me at the hustings, he is a good speaker?"

"A good speaker?—in one sense he is. He never says a word too much. The last time he seconded the nomination of the man you are to succeed, this was his speech: 'Brother Electors, for twenty years I have been one of the judges at our county cattle-show. I know one animal from another. Looking at the specimens before us to-day none of them are as good of their kind as I've seen elsewhere. But if you choose Sir John Hogg you'll not get the wrong sow by the ear!'"

"At least," said George, after a laugh at this sample of eloquence unadorned, "Mr. Steen does not err on the side of flattery in his commendations of a candidate. But what makes him such an authority with the farmers? Is he a first-rate agriculturist?"

"In thrift, yes!—in spirit, no! He says that all expensive experiments should be left to gentlemen farmers. He is an authority with other tenants—1stly, Because he is a very keen censor of their landlords; 2ndly, Because he holds himself thoroughly independent of his own; 3rdly, Because he is supposed to have studied the political bearings of questions that affect the landed interest, and has more than once been summoned to give his opinion on such subjects to Committees of both Houses of Parliament. Here he comes. Observe, when I leave you to talk to him, 1stly, that you confess utter ignorance of practical farming. Nothing enrages him like the presumption of a gentleman farmer like myself; 2ndly, that you ask his opinion on the publication of Agricultural Statistics, just modestly intimating that you, as at present advised, think that inquisitorial researches into a man's business involve principles opposed to the British Constitution, And on all that he may say as to the shortcomings of landlords in general, and

of your father in particular, make no reply, but listen with an air of melancholy conviction. How do you do, Mr. Steen, and how's the Mistress? Why have you not brought her with you?"

"My good woman is in the straw again, Squire. Who is that youngster?"

"Hist! let me introduce Mr. Belvoir."

Mr. Belvoir offers his hand.

"No, sir!" vociferates Steen putting both his own hands behind him. "No offence, young gentleman. But I don't give my hand at first sight to a man who wants to shake a vote out of it. Not that I know anything against you. But, if you be a farmer's friend rabbits are not, and my Lord your father is a great one for rabbits.

"Indeed you are mistaken there!" cries George, with vehement earnestness. Mr. Travers gave him a nudge as much as to say, "Hold your tongue." George understood the hint, and is carried off meekly by Mr. Steen down the solitude of the plantations.

The guests now arrived fast and thick. They consisted chiefly not only of Mr. Travers's tenants but of farmers and their families within the range of eight or ten miles from the Park, with a few of the neighbouring gentry and clergy.

It was not a supper intended to include the labouring class. For Mr. Travers had an especial dislike to the custom of exhibiting peasants at feeding-time, as if they were so many tamed animals of an inferior species. When he entertained work-people, he made them comfortable in their own way; and peasants feel more comfortable when not invited to be stared out of countenance.

"Well, Lethbridge," said Mr. Travers, "where is the young gladiator you promised to bring?"

"I did bring him, and he was by my side not a minute ago. He has suddenly given me the slip—*abiit, evasit, erupit*. I was looking round for him in vain when you accosted me."

"I hope he has not seen some guest of mine whom he wants to fight."

"I hope not," answered the Parson, doubtfully. "He's a

strange fellow. But I think you will be pleased with him—that is, if he can be found. Oh, Mr. Saunderson, how do you do? Have you seen your visitor?”

“No, sir, I have just come. My Mistress, Squire, and my three girls;—and this is my son.”

“A hearty welcome to all,” said the graceful Squire; (turning to Saunderson junior) “I suppose you are fond of dancing. Get yourself a partner. We may as well open the ball.”

“Thank you, sir, but I never dance,” said Saunderson junior, with an air of austere superiority to an amusement which the March of Intellect had left behind.

“Then you’ll have less to regret when you are grown old. But the band is striking up; we must adjourn to the marquee, George” (Mr. Belvoir, escaped from Mr. Steen, had just made his appearance), “will you give your arm to Cecilia, to whom I think you are engaged for the first quadrille?”

“I hope,” said George to Cecilia, as they walked towards the marquee, “that Mr. Steen is not an average specimen of the electors I shall have to canvass. Whether he has been brought up to honour his own father and mother I can’t pretend to say, but he seems bent upon teaching me not to honour mine. Having taken away my father’s moral character upon the unfounded allegation that he loved rabbits better than mankind, he then assailed my innocent mother on the score of religion, and inquired when she was going over to the Church of Rome—basing that inquiry on the assertion that she had taken away her custom from a Protestant grocer and conferred it on a Papist.”

“Those are favourable signs, Mr. Belvoir. Mr. Steen always prefaces a kindness by a great deal of incivility. I asked him once to lend me a pony, my own being suddenly taken lame, and he seized that opportunity to tell me that my father was an impostor in pretending to be a judge of cattle; that he was a tyrant, screwing his tenants in order to indulge extravagant habits of hospitality; and implied that it would be a great mercy if we did not live to apply to him, not for a pony, but for parochial relief. I went away indignant. But he sent me the pony. I am sure he will give you his vote.”

"Meanwhile," said George, with a timid attempt at gallantry, as they now commenced the quadrille, "I take encouragement from the belief that I have the good wishes of Miss Travers. If ladies had votes, as Mr. Mill recommends, why, then— —"

"Why, then, I should vote as papa does," said Miss Travers, simply. "And if women had votes, I suspect there would be very little peace in any household where they did not vote as the man at the head of it wished them."

"But I believe, after all," said the aspirant to Parliament, seriously, "that the advocates for female suffrage would limit it to women independent of masculine control—widows and spinsters voting in right of their own independent tenements."

"In that case," said Cecilia, "I suppose they would still generally go by the opinion of some man they relied on, or make a very silly choice if they did not."

"You underrate the good sense of your sex."

"I hope not. Do you underrate the good sense of yours, if, in far more than half the things appertaining to daily life, the wisest men say, 'better leave *them* to the *women*'? But you're forgetting the figure—*cavalier seul*."

"By the way," said George, in another interval of the dance, "do you know a Mr. Chillingly, the son of Sir Peter, of Exmundham, in Westshire?"

"No; why do you ask?"

"Because I thought I caught a glimpse of his face: it was just as Mr. Steen was bearing me away down that plantation. From what you say, I must suppose I was mistaken."

"Chillingly! But surely some persons were talking yesterday at dinner about a young gentleman of that name as being likely to stand for Westshire at the next election, but who had made a very unpopular and eccentric speech on the occasion of his coming of age."

"The same man—I was at college with him—a very singular character. He was thought clever—won a prize or two—took a good degree, but it was generally said that he would have deserved a much higher one if some of his papers had not contained covert jests either on the subject or the examiners. It is a dangerous thing to set up as a humorist in practical life

—especially public life. They say Mr. Pitt had naturally a great deal of wit and humour, but he wisely suppressed any evidence of those qualities in his Parliamentary speeches. Just like Chillingly, to turn into ridicule the important event of festivities in honour of his coming of age—an occasion that can never occur again in the whole course of his life.”

“It was bad taste,” said Cecilia, “if intentional. But perhaps he was misunderstood, or taken by surprise.”

“Misunderstood—possibly; but taken by surprise—no. The coolest fellow I ever met. Not that I have met him very often. Latterly, indeed, at Cambridge he lived much alone. It was said that he read hard. I doubt that, for my rooms were just over his, and I know that he was much more frequently out of doors than in. He rambled a good deal about the country on foot. I have seen him in by-lanes a dozen miles distant from the town when I have been riding back from the hunt. He was fond of the water, and pulled a mighty strong oar, but declined to belong to our university crew; yet if ever there was a fight between undergraduates and bargemen, he was sure to be in the midst of it. Yes, a very great oddity indeed, full of contradictions, for a milder, quieter fellow in general intercourse you could not see; and as for the jests of which he was accused in his examination papers, his very face should have acquitted him of the charge before any impartial jury of his countrymen.”

“You sketch quite an interesting picture of him,” said Cecilia. “I wish we did know him; he would be worth seeing.”

“And, once seen, you would not easily forget him—a dark, handsome face, with large melancholy eyes, and with one of those spare slender figures which enable a man to disguise his strength, as a fraudulent billiard-player disguises his play.”

The dance had ceased during this conversation, and the speakers were now walking slowly to and fro the lawn amid the general crowd.

“How well your father plays the part of host to these rural folks!” said George, with a secret envy. “Do observe how quietly he puts that shy young farmer at his ease, and now how kindly he deposits that lame old lady on the bench, and places

the stool under her feet. What a canvasser he would be! and how young he still looks, and how monstrous handsome!"

This last compliment was uttered as Travers, having made the old lady comfortable, had joined the three Miss Saundersons, dividing his pleasant smile equally between them, and seemingly unconscious of the admiring glances which many another rural beauty directed towards him as he passed along. About the man there was a certain indescribable elegance, a natural suavity free from all that affectation, whether of forced heartiness or condescending civility, which too often characterises the well-meant efforts of provincial magnates to accommodate themselves to persons of inferior station and breeding. It is a great advantage to a man to have passed his early youth in that most equal and most polished of all democracies—the best society of large capitals. And to such acquired advantage Leopold Travers added the inborn qualities that please.

Later in the evening Travers, again accosting Mr. Lethbridge, said, "I have been talking much to the Saundersons about that young man who did us the inestimable service of punishing your ferocious parishioner, Tom Bowles; and all I hear so confirms the interest your own account inspired me with, that I should really like much to make his acquaintance. Has not he turned up yet?"

"No; I fear he must have gone. But in that case I hope you will take his generous desire to serve my poor basket-maker into benevolent consideration."

"Do not press me; I feel so reluctant to refuse any request of yours. But I have my own theory as to the management of an estate, and my system does not allow of favour. I should wish to explain that to the young stranger himself. For I hold courage in such honour that I do not like a brave man to leave these parts with an impression that Leopold Travers is an ungracious churl. However, he may not have gone. I will go and look for him myself. Just tell Cecilia that she has danced enough with the gentry, and that I have told farmer Turby's son, a fine young fellow, and a capital rider across country, that I expect him to show my daughter that he can dance as well as he rides."

CHAPTER IV.

QUITTING Mr. Lethbridge, Travers turned with quick step towards the more solitary part of the grounds. He did not find the object of his search in the walks of the plantation; and, on taking the circuit of his demesne, wound his way back towards the lawn through a sequestered rocky hollow in the rear of the marquee, which had been devoted to a fernery. Here he came to a sudden pause; for, seated a few yards before him on a grey crag, and the moonlight full on his face, he saw a solitary man, looking upwards with a still and mournful gaze, evidently absorbed in abstract contemplation.

Recalling the description of the stranger which he had heard from Mr. Lethbridge and the Saundersons, Mr. Travers felt sure that he had come on him at last. He approached gently; and, being much concealed by the tall ferns, Kenelm (for that itinerant it was) did not see him advance, until he felt a hand on his shoulder, and, turning round, beheld a winning smile and heard a pleasant voice.

"I think I am not mistaken," said Leopold Travers, "in assuming you to be the gentleman whom Mr. Lethbridge promised to introduce to me, and who is staying with my tenant, Mr. Saunderson?"

Kenelm rose and bowed. Travers saw at once that it was the bow of a man in his own world, and not in keeping with the Sunday costume of a petty farmer. "Nay," said he, "let us talk seated;" and placing himself on the crag, he made room for Kenelm beside him.

"In the first place," resumed Travers, "I must thank you for having done a public service in putting down the brute force which has long tyrannised over the neighbourhood. Often in my young days I have felt the disadvantage of height and sinews, whenever it would have been a great convenience to terminate dispute or chastise insolence by a resort to man's primitive weapons; but I never more lamented my physical inferiority than on certain occasions when I would have given

my ears to be able to thrash Tom Bowles myself. It has been as great a disgrace to my estate that that bully should so long have infested it, as it is to the King of Italy not to be able with all his armies to put down a brigand in Calabria."

"Pardon me, Mr. Travers, but I am one of those rare persons who do not like to hear ill of their friends. Mr. Thomas Bowles is a particular friend of mine."

"Eh!" cried Travers, aghast. "'Friend!' you are joking."

"You would not accuse me of joking if you knew me better. But surely you have felt that there are few friends one likes more cordially, and ought to respect more heedfully, than the enemy with whom one has just made it up."

"You say well, and I accept the rebuke," said Travers, more and more surprised. "And I certainly have less right to abuse Mr. Bowles than you have, since I had not the courage to fight him. To turn to another subject less provocative. Mr. Lethbridge has told me of your amiable desire to serve two of his young parishioners—Will Somers and Jessie Wiles—and of your generous offer to pay the money Mrs. Bawtrey demands for the transfer of her lease. To that negotiation my consent is necessary, and that consent I cannot give. Shall I tell you why?"

"Pray do. Your reasons may admit of argument."

"Every reason admits of argument," said Mr. Travers, amused at the calm assurance of a youthful stranger in anticipating argument with a skilful proprietor on the management of his own property. "I do not, however, tell you my reasons for the sake of argument, but in vindication of my seeming want of courtesy towards yourself. I have had a very hard and a very difficult task to perform in bringing the rental of my estate up to its proper value. In doing so, I have been compelled to adopt one uniform system, equally applied to my largest and my pettiest holdings. That system consists in securing the best and safest tenants I can, at the rents computed by a valuer in whom I have confidence. To this system, universally adopted on my estate, though it incurred much unpopularity at first, I have at length succeeded in reconciling the public opinion of my neighbourhood. People

began by saying I was hard ; they now acknowledge I am just. If I once give way to favour or sentiment, I unhinge my whole system. Every day I am subjected to moving solicitations. Lord Twostars—a keen politician—begs me to give a vacant farm to a tenant because he is an excellent canvasser, and has always voted straight with the party. Mrs. Fourstars, a most benevolent woman, entreats me not to dismiss another tenant, because he is in distressed circumstances and has a large family—very good reasons perhaps for my excusing him an arrear, or allowing him a retiring pension, but the worst reasons in the world for letting him continue to ruin himself and my land. Now, Mrs. Bawtrey has a small holding on lease at the inadequate rent of 8% a-year. She asks 45% for its transfer, but she can't transfer the lease without my consent ; and I can get 12% a-year as a moderate rental from a large choice of competent tenants. It will better answer me to pay her the 45% myself, which I have no doubt the incoming tenant would pay me back, at least in part ; and if he did not, the additional rent would be good interest for my expenditure. Now, you happen to take a sentimental interest, as you pass through the village, in the loves of a needy cripple, whose utmost industry has but served to save himself from parish relief, and a giddy girl without a sixpence, and you ask me to accept these very equivocal tenants instead of substantial ones, and at a rent one-third less than the market value. Suppose that I yielded to your request, what becomes of my reputation for practical, business-like justice ? I shall have made an inroad into the system by which my whole estate is managed, and have invited all manner of solicitations on the part of friends and neighbours, which I could no longer consistently refuse, having shown how easily I can be persuaded into compliance by a stranger whom I may never see again. And are you sure, after all, that, if you did prevail on me, you would do the individual good you aim at ? It is, no doubt, very pleasant to think one has made a young couple happy. But if that young couple fail in keeping the little shop to which you would transplant them (and nothing more likely—peasants seldom become good shopkeepers), and find them-

selves, with a family of children, dependent solely, not on the arm of a strong labourer, but the ten fingers of a sickly cripple, who makes clever baskets, for which there is but slight and precarious demand in the neighbourhood, may you not have insured the misery of the couple you wished to render happy?"

"I withdraw all argument," said Kenelm, with an aspect so humiliated and dejected, that it would have softened a Greenland bear, or a Counsel for the Prosecution. "I am more and more convinced that of all the shams in the world, that of benevolence is the greatest. It seems so easy to do good, and it is so difficult to do it. Everywhere, in this hateful civilised life, one runs one's head against a system. A system, Mr. Travers, is man's servile imitation of the blind tyranny of what in our ignorance we call 'Natural Laws,' a mechanical something through which the world is ruled by the cruelty of General Principles, to the utter disregard of individual welfare. By Natural Laws creatures prey on each other, and big fishes eat little ones upon system. It is, nevertheless, a hard thing for the little fish. Every nation, every town, every hamlet, every occupation, has a system, by which, somehow or other, the pond swarms with fishes, of which a great many inferiors contribute to increase the size of a superior. It is an idle benevolence to keep one solitary gudgeon out of the jaws of a pike. Here am I doing what I thought the simplest thing in the world, asking a gentleman, evidently as good-natured as myself, to allow an old woman to let her premises to a deserving young couple, and paying what she asks for it out of my own money. And I find that I am running against a system, and invading all the laws by which a rental is increased and an estate improved. Mr. Travers, you have no cause for regret in not having beaten Tom Bowles. You have beaten his victor, and I now give up all dream of further interference with the Natural Laws that govern the village which I have visited in vain. I had meant to remove Tom Bowles from that quiet community. I shall now leave him to return to his former habits—to marry Jessie Wiles—which he certainly will do, and——"

"Hold!" cried Mr. Travers. "Do you mean to say that you can induce Tom Bowles to leave the village?"

"I *had* induced him to do it, provided Jessie Wiles married the basketmaker; but as that is out of the question, I am bound to tell him so, and he will stay."

"But if he left, what would become of his business? His mother could not keep it on; his little place is a freehold; the only house in the village that does not belong to me, or I should have ejected him long ago. Would he sell the premises to me?"

"Not if he stays and marries Jessie Wiles. But if he goes with me to Luscombe and settles in that town as a partner to his uncle, I suppose he would be too glad to sell a house of which he can have no pleasant recollections. But what then? You cannot violate your system for the sake of a miserable forge."

"It would not violate my system if, instead of yielding to a sentiment, I gained an advantage; and, to say truth, I should be very glad to buy that forge and the fields that go with it."

"'Tis your affair now, not mine, Mr. Travers. I no longer presume to interfere. I leave the neighbourhood to-morrow: see if *you* can negotiate with Mr. Bowles. I have the honour to wish you a good evening."

"Nay, young gentleman, I cannot allow you to quit me thus. You have declined apparently to join the dancers, but you will at least join the supper. Come!"

"Thank you sincerely, no. I came here merely on the business which your system has settled."

"But I am not sure that it is settled." Here Mr. Travers wound his arm within Kenelm's, and looking him full in the face, said, "I know that I am speaking to a gentleman at least equal in rank to myself, but as I enjoy the melancholy privilege of being the older man, do not think I take an unwarrantable liberty in asking if you object to tell me your name. I should like to introduce you to my daughter, who is very partial to Jessie Wiles and to Will Somers. But I can't venture to inflame her imagination by designating you as a prince in disguise."

"Mr. Travers, you express yourself with exquisite delicacy. But I am just starting in life, and I shrink from mortifying my

father by associating my name with a signal failure. Suppose I were an anonymous contributor, say, to *The Londoner*, and I had just brought that highly intellectual journal into discredit by a feeble attempt at a good-natured criticism or a generous sentiment, would that be the fitting occasion to throw off the mask, and parade myself to a mocking world as the imbecile violator of an established system? Should I not, in a moment so untoward, more than ever desire to merge my insignificant unit in the mysterious importance which the smallest Singular obtains when he makes himself a Plural, and speaks not as 'I,' but as 'We'? *We* are insensible to the charm of young ladies; *We* are not bribed by suppers; *We*, like the witches of *Macbeth*, have no name on earth; *We* are the greatest wisdom of the greatest number; *We* are so upon system; *We* salute you, Mr. Travers, and depart unassailable."

Here Kenelm rose, doffed and replaced his hat in majestic salutation, turned towards the entrance of the fernery and found himself suddenly face to face with George Belvoir, behind whom followed, with a throng of guests, the fair form of Cecilia. George Belvoir caught Kenelm by the hand, and exclaimed, "Chillingly! I thought I could not be mistaken."

"Chillingly!" echoed Leopold Travers from behind. "Are you the son of my old friend Sir Peter?"

Thus discovered and environed, Kenelm did not lose his wonted presence of mind; he turned round to Leopold Travers, who was now close in his rear, and whispered, "If my father was your friend, do not disgrace his son. Do not say I am a failure. Deviate from your system, and let Will Somers succeed Mrs. Bawtrey." Then reverting his face to Mr. Belvoir, he said tranquilly, "Yes; we have met before."

"Cecilia," said Travers, now interposing, "I am happy to introduce to you as Mr. Chillingly, not only the son of an old friend of mine, not only the knight-errant of whose gallant conduct on behalf of your *protégée* Jessie Wiles we have heard so much, but the eloquent arguer who has conquered my better judgment in a matter on which I thought myself infallible. Tell Mr. Lethbridge that I accept Will Somers as a tenant for Mrs. Bawtrey's premises."

Kenelm grasped the Squire's hand cordially. "May it be in my power to do a kind thing to you, in spite of any system to the contrary!"

' Mr. Chillingly, give your arm to my daughter. You will not now object to join the dancers?'

CHAPTER V.

CECILIA stole a shy glance at Kenelm as the two emerged from the fernery into the open space of the lawn. His countenance pleased her. She thought she discovered much latent gentleness under the cold and mournful gravity of its expression; and attributing the silence he maintained to some painful sense of an awkward position in the abrupt betrayal of his incognito, sought with womanly tact to dispel his supposed embarrassment.

"You have chosen a delightful mode of seeing the country this lovely summer weather, Mr. Chillingly. I believe such pedestrian exercises are very common with university students during the long vacation."

"Very common, though they generally wander in packs like wild dogs or Australian dingoes. It is only a tame dog that one finds on the road travelling by himself; and then, unless he behaves very quietly, it is ten to one that he is stoned as a mad dog."

"But I am afraid, from what I hear, that you have not been travelling very quietly."

"You are quite right, Miss Travers, and I am a sad dog if not a mad one. But pardon me, we are nearing the marquee; the band is striking up, and, alas! I am not a dancing dog."

He released Cecilia's arm, and bowed.

"Let us sit here a while, then," said she, motioning to a garden-bench. "I have no engagement for the next dance, and as I am a little tired, I shall be glad of a reprieve."

Kenelm sighed, and with the air of a martyr stretching himself on the rack, took his place beside the fairest girl in the county.

"You were at college with Mr. Belvoir?"

"I was."

"He was thought clever there?"

"I have not a doubt of it."

"You know he is canvassing our county for the next election. My father takes a warm interest in his success, and thinks he will be a useful member of Parliament."

"Of that I am certain. For the first five years he will be called pushing, noisy, and conceited, much sneered at by men of his own age, and coughed down on great occasions; for the five following years he will be considered a sensible man in committees, and a necessary feature in debate; at the end of those years he will be an under-secretary; in five years more he will be a Cabinet Minister, and the representative of an important section of opinions: he will be an irreproachable private character, and his wife will be seen wearing the family diamonds at all the great parties. She will take an interest in politics and theology; and if she die before him, her husband will show his sense of wedded happiness by choosing another lady, equally fitted to wear the family diamonds and to maintain the family consequences."

In spite of her laughter, Cecilia felt a certain awe at the solemnity of voice and manner with which Kenelm delivered these oracular sentences, and the whole prediction seemed strangely in unison with her own impressions of the character whose fate was thus shadowed out.

"Are you a fortune-teller, Mr. Chillingly?" she asked, falteringly, and after a pause.

"As good a one as any whose hand you could cross with a shilling."

"Will you tell me my fortune?"

"No; I never tell the fortunes of ladies, because your sex is credulous, and a lady might believe what I tell her. And when we believe such and such is to be our fate, we are too apt to work out our life into the verification of the belief. If

Lady Macbeth had disbelieved in the witches, she would never have persuaded her lord to murder Duncan."

"But can you not predict me a more cheerful fortune than that tragical illustration of yours seems to threaten?"

"The future is never cheerful to those who look on the dark side of the question. Mr. Gray is too good a poet for people to read nowadays, otherwise I should refer you to his lines in the *Ode to Eton College*—

" 'See how all around us wait
The ministers of human fate,
And black Misfortune's baleful train.' "

Meanwhile it is something to enjoy the present. We are young—we are listening to music—there is no cloud over the summer stars—our conscience is clear—our hearts untroubled; why look forward in search of happiness?—shall we ever be happier than we are at this moment?"

Here Mr. Travers came up. "We are going to supper in a few minutes," said he; "and before we lose sight of each other, Mr. Chillingly, I wish to impress on you the moral fact that one good turn deserves another. I have yielded to your wish, and now you must yield to mine. Come and stay a few days with me, and see your benevolent intentions carried out."

Kenelm paused. Now that he was discovered, why should he not pass a few days among his equals? Realities or shams might be studied with squires no less than with farmers; besides, he had taken a liking to Travers. That graceful *ci-devant* Wildair, with the slight form and the delicate face, was unlike rural squires in general. Kenelm paused, and then said, frankly—

"I accept your invitation. Would the middle of next week suit you?"

"The sooner the better. Why not to-morrow?"

"To-morrow I am pre-engaged to an excursion with Mr. Bowles. That may occupy two or three days, and meanwhile I must write home for other garments than those in which I am a sham."

"Come any day you like."

"Agreed."

"Agreed ; and, hark ! the supper-bell."

"Supper," said Kenelm, offering his arm to Miss Travers,— "supper is a word truly interesting, truly poetical. It associates itself with the entertainments of the ancients—with the Augustan age—with Horace and Mecænas ;—with the only elegant but too fleeting period of the modern world—with the nobles and wits of Paris, when Paris had wits and nobles ;—with Molière and the warm-hearted Duke who is said to have been the original of Molière's Misanthrope ;—with Madame de Sévigné and the Racine whom that inimitable letter-writer denied to be a poet ;—with Swift and Bolingbroke — with Johnson, Goldsmith, and Garrick. Epochs are signalised by their eatings. I honour him who revives the Golden Age of suppers." So saying, his face brightened.

CHAPTER VI.

KENELM CHILLINGLY, ESQ., TO SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART.,
ETC., ETC.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—I am alive and unmarried. Providence has watched over me in these respects ; but I have had narrow escapes. Hitherto I have not acquired much worldly wisdom in my travels. It is true that I have been paid two shillings as a day labourer, and, in fact, have fairly earned at least six shillings more ; but against that additional claim I generously set off, as an equivalent, my board and lodging. On the other hand, I have spent forty-five pounds out of the fifty which I devoted to the purchase of experience. But I hope you will be a gainer by that investment. Send an order to Mr. William Somers, basketmaker, Graveleigh, —shire, for the hampers and game-baskets you require, and I undertake to say that you will save twenty per cent. on that article (all expenses of carriage deducted), and do a good action into the bargain. You know, from long habit, what a good action is worth better than I do.

I dare say you will be more pleased to learn, than I am to record, the fact, that I have been again decoyed into the society of ladies and gentlemen, and have accepted an invitation to pass a few days at Neesdale Park with Mr. Travers—christened Leopold—who calls you ‘his old friend’—a term which I take for granted belongs to that class of poetic exaggeration in which the ‘dears’ and ‘darlings’ of conjugal intercourse may be categorised. Having for that visit no suitable garments in my knapsack, kindly tell Jenkes to forward me a portmanteau full of those which I habitually wore as Kenelm Chillingly, directed to me at ‘Needsdale Park, near Beaverston.’ Let me find it there on Wednesday.

“I leave this place to-morrow morning in company with a friend of the name of Bowles—no relation to the reverend gentleman of that name who held the doctrine that a poet should bore us to death with fiddle-faddle minutiae of natural objects in preference to that study of the insignificant creature Man, in his relations to his species, to which Mr. Pope limited the range of his inferior muse; and who, practising as he preached, wrote some very nice verses, to which the Lake school and its successors are largely indebted. My Mr. Bowles has exercised his faculty upon Man, and has a powerful inborn gift in that line which only requires cultivation to render him a match for any one. His more masculine nature is at present much obscured by that passing cloud which, in conventional language, is called ‘a hopeless attachment.’ But I trust, in the course of our excursion, which is to be taken on foot, that this vapour may consolidate by motion, as some old-fashioned astronomers held that the nebula does consolidate into a matter-of-fact world. Is it Rochefoucauld who says that a man is never more likely to form a hopeful attachment for one than when his heart is softened by a hopeless attachment to another? May it be long, my dear father, before you condole with me on the first or congratulate me on the second.—Your affectionate son,

“KENELM.

Direct to me at Mr. Travers’s. Kindest love to my mother.

The answer to this letter is here subjoined as the most convenient place for its insertion, though of course it was not received till some days after the date of my next chapter.

SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART., TO KENELM CHILLINGLY, ESQ.

"MY DEAR BOY,—With this I despatch the portmanteau you require to the address that you give. I remember well Leopold Travers when he was in the Guards—a very handsome and a very wild young fellow. But he had much more sense than people gave him credit for, and frequented intellectual society; at least I met him very often at my friend Campion's, whose house was then the favourite rendezvous of distinguished persons. He had very winning manners, and one could not help taking an interest in him. I was very glad when I heard he had married and reformed. Here I beg to observe that a man who contracts a taste for low company may indeed often marry, but he seldom reforms when he does so. And, on the whole, I should be much pleased to hear that the experience which has cost you forty-five pounds had convinced you that you might be better employed than earning two, or even six shillings, as a day-labourer.

"I have not given your love to your mother, as you requested. In fact, you have placed me in a very false position towards that other author of your eccentric being. I could only guard you from the inquisition of the police and the notoriety of descriptive hand-bills by allowing my lady to suppose that you had gone abroad with the Duke of Clairville and his family. It is easy to tell a fib, but it is very difficult to untell it. However, as soon as you have made up your mind to resume your normal position among ladies and gentlemen, I should be greatly obliged if you would apprise me. I don't wish to keep a fib on my conscience a day longer than may be necessary to prevent the necessity of telling another.

"From what you say of Mr. Bowles's study of Man, and his inborn talent for that scientific investigation, I suppose that he is a professed Metaphysician, and I should be glad of his candid opinion upon the Primary Basis of Morals, a subject

upon which I have for three years meditated the consideration of a critical paper. But having lately read a controversy thereon between two eminent philosophers, in which each accuses the other of not understanding him, I have resolved for the present to leave the Basis in its unsettled condition.

"You rather alarm me when you say you have had a narrow escape from marriage. Should you, in order to increase the experience you set out to acquire, decide on trying the effect of a Mrs. Chillingly upon your nervous system, it would be well to let me know a little beforehand, so that I might prepare your mother's mind for that event. Such household trifles are within her special province; and she would be much put out if a Mrs. Chillingly dropped on her unawares.

"This subject, however, is too serious to admit of a jest even between two persons who understand, so well as you and I do, the secret cipher by which each other's outward style of jest is to be gravely interpreted into the irony which says one thing and means another. My dear boy, you are very young—you are wandering about in a very strange manner—and may, no doubt, meet with many a pretty face by the way, with which you may fancy that you fall in love. You cannot think me a barbarous tyrant if I ask you to promise me, on your honour, that you will not propose to any young lady before you come first to me and submit the case to my examination and approval. You know me too well to suppose that I should unreasonably withhold my consent if convinced that your happiness was at stake. But while what a young man may fancy to be love is often a trivial incident in his life, marriage is the greatest event in it; if on one side it may involve his happiness, on the other side it may insure his misery. Dearest, best, and oddest of sons, give me the promise I ask, and you will free my breast from a terribly anxious thought which now sits on it like a nightmare.

"Your recommendation of a basketmaker comes opportunely. All such matters go through the bailiff's hands, and it was but the other day that Green was complaining of the high prices of the man he employed for hampers and game-baskets. Green shall write to your *protégé*.

"Keep me informed of your proceedings as much as your anomalous character will permit ; so that nothing may diminish my confidence that the man who had the honour to be christened Kenelm will not disgrace his name, but acquire the distinction denied to a Peter.—Your affectionate father."

CHAPTER VII.

VILLAGERS lie abed on Sundays later than on workdays, and no shutter was unclosed in a window of the rural street through which Kenelm Chillingly and Tom Bowles went, side by side, in the still soft air of the Sabbath morn. Side by side they went on, crossing the pastoral glebe-lands, where the kine still drowsily reclined under the bowery shade of glinting chestnut leaves; and diving thence into a narrow lane or by-road, winding deep between lofty banks all tangled with convolvulus and wild-rose and honeysuckle.

They walked in silence, for Kenelm, after one or two vain attempts at conversation, had the tact to discover that his companion was in no mood for talk; and being himself one of those creatures whose minds glide easily into the dreamy monologue of reverie, he was not displeased to muse on undisturbed, drinking quietly into his heart the subdued joy of the summer morn, with the freshness of its sparkling dews, the wayward carol of its earliest birds, the serene quietude of its limpid breezy air. Only when they came to fresh turnings in the road that led towards the town to which they were bound, Tom Bowles stepped before his companion, indicating the way by a monosyllable or a gesture. Thus they journeyed for hours, till the sun attained power, and a little wayside inn near a hamlet invited Kenelm to the thought of rest and food.

"Tom," said he then, rousing from his reverie, "what do you say to breakfast?"

Answered Tom sullenly, "I am not hungry—but as you like."

"Thank you, then we will stop here a while. I find it difficult

to believe that you are not hungry, for you are very strong, and there are two things which generally accompany great physical strength: the one is a keen appetite; the other is—though you may not suppose it, and it is not commonly known—a melancholic temperament.”

“Eh!—a what?”

“A tendency to melancholy. Of course you have heard of Hercules—you know the saying ‘as strong as Hercules’?”

“Yes—of course.”

“Well, I was first led to the connection between strength, appetite, and melancholy, by reading in an old author named Plutarch that Hercules was among the most notable instances of melancholy temperament which the author was enabled to quote. That must have been the traditional notion of the Herculean constitution; and as for appetite, the appetite of Hercules was a standard joke of the comic writers. When I read that observation it set me thinking, being myself melancholic, and having an exceedingly good appetite. Sure enough, when I began to collect evidence, I found that the strongest men with whom I made acquaintance, including prize-fighters and Irish draymen, were disposed to look upon life more on the shady than the sunny side of the way; in short, they were melancholic. But the kindness of Providence allowed them to enjoy their meals, as you and I are about to do.” In the utterance of this extraordinary crotchet Kenelm had halted his steps; but now striding briskly forward he entered the little inn, and after a glance at its larder, ordered the whole contents to be brought out and placed within a honeysuckle arbour which he spied in the angle of a bowling-green at the rear of the house.

In addition to the ordinary condiments of loaf, and butter, and eggs, and milk, and tea, the board soon groaned beneath the weight of pigeon-pie, cold ribs of beef and shoulder of mutton, remains of a feast which the members of a monthly rustic club had held there the day before. Tom ate little at first; but example is contagious, and gradually he vied with his companion in the diminution of the solid viands before him. Then he called for brandy.

"No," said Kenelm. "No, Tom; you have promised me friendship, and that is not compatible with brandy. Brandy is the worst enemy a man like you can have; and would make you quarrel even with me. If you want a stimulus I allow you a pipe: I don't smoke myself, as a rule, but there have been times in my life when I required soothing, and then I have felt that a whiff of tobacco stills and softens one like the kiss of a little child. Bring this gentleman a pipe."

Tom grunted, but took to the pipe kindly, and in a few minutes, during which Kenelm left him in silence, a lowering furrow between his brows smoothed itself away.

Gradually he felt the sweetening influences of the day and the place, of the merry sunbeams at play amid the leaves of the arbour, of the frank perfume of the honeysuckle, of the warble of the birds before they sank into the taciturn repose of a summer noon.

It was with a reluctant sigh that he rose at last, when Kenelm said, "We have yet far to go, we must push on."

The landlady, indeed, had already given them a hint that she and the family wanted to go to church, and to shut up the house in their absence. Kenelm drew out his purse, but Tom did the same with a return of cloud on his brow, and Kenelm saw that he would be mortally offended if suffered to be treated as an inferior; so each paid his due share, and the two men resumed their wandering. This time it was along a by-path amid fields, which was a shorter cut than the lane they had previously followed, to the main road to Luscombe. They walked slowly till they came to a rustic foot-bridge which spanned a gloomy trout-stream, not noisy, but with a low, sweet murmur, doubtless the same stream beside which, many miles away, Kenelm had conversed with the minstrel. Just as they came to this bridge there floated to their ears the distant sound of the hamlet church bell.

"Now let us sit here a while and listen," said Kenelm, seating himself on the baluster of the bridge. "I see that you brought away your pipe from the inn, and provided yourself with tobacco: refill the pipe and listen."

Tom half smiled and obeyed.

"O friend," said Kenelm, earnestly, and after a long pause of thought, "do you not feel what a blessed thing it is in this mortal life to be ever and anon reminded that you have a soul?"

Tom, startled, withdrew the pipe from his lips, and muttered—

"Eh!"

Kenelm continued—

"You and I, Tom, are not so good as we ought to be—of that there is no doubt; and good people would say justly that we should now be within yon church itself rather than listening to its bell. Granted, my friend, granted; but still it is something to hear that bell, and to feel by the train of thought which began in our innocent childhood, when we said our prayers at the knees of a mother, that we were lifted beyond this visible Nature, beyond these fields, and woods, and waters, in which, fair though they be, you and I miss something, in which neither you nor I are as happy as the kine in the fields, as the birds on the bough, as the fishes in the water—lifted to a consciousness of a sense vouchsafed to you and to me, not vouchsafed to the kine, to the bird, and the fish—a sense to comprehend that Nature has a God, and Man has a life hereafter. The bell says that to you and to me. Were that bell a thousand times more musical it could not say that to beast, bird, and fish. Do you understand me, Tom?"

Tom remains silent for a minute, and then replies—"I never thought of it before; but as you put it, I understand."

"Nature never gives to a living thing capacities not practically meant for its benefit and use. If Nature gives to us capacities to believe that we have a Creator whom we never saw, of whom we have no direct proof, who is kind and good and tender beyond all that we know of kind and good and tender on earth, it is because the endowment of capacities to conceive such a Being must be for our benefit and use; it would not be for our benefit and use if it were a lie. Again, if Nature has given to us a capacity to receive the notion that we live again, no matter whether some of us refuse so to believe, and argue against it,—why, the very capacity to receive the idea (for unless we

received it we could not argue against it) proves that it is for our benefit and use ; and if there were no such life hereafter, we should be governed and influenced, arrange our modes of life, and mature our civilisation, by obedience to a lie, which Nature falsified herself in giving us the capacity to believe. You still understand me ?”

“ Yes ; it bothers me a little, for you see I am not a parson’s man ; but I do understand.”

“ Then, my friend, study to apply—for it requires constant study—study to apply that which you understand to your own case. You are something more than Tom Bowles, the smith and doctor of horses ; something more than the magnificent animal who rages for his mate and fights every rival : the bull does that. You are a soul endowed with the capacity to receive the idea of a Creator so divinely wise and great and good that, though acting by the agency of general laws, He can accommodate them to all individual cases, so that—taking into account the life hereafter, which He grants to you the capacity to believe—all that troubles you now will be proved to you wise and great and good either in this life or the other. Lay that truth to your heart, friend, now—before the bell stops ringing ; recall it every time you hear the church bell ring again. And oh, Tom, you have such a noble nature !——”

“ I—I ! don’t jeer me—don’t.”

“ Such a noble nature ; for you can love so passionately, you can war so fiercely, and yet, when convinced that your love would be misery to her you love, can resign it ; and yet, when beaten in your war, can so forgive your victor that you are walking in this solitude with him as a friend, knowing that you have but to drop a foot behind him in order to take his life in an unguarded moment ; and rather than take his life, you would defend it against an army. Do you think I am so dull as not to see all that ? and is not all that a noble nature ?”

Tom Bowles covered his face with his hands, and his broad breast heaved.

“ Well, then, to that noble nature I now trust. I myself have done little good in life. I may never do much ; but let me think that I have not crossed your life in vain for you and

for those whom your life can colour for good or for bad. As you are strong, be gentle ; as you can love one, be kind to all ; as you have so much that is grand as Man—that is, the highest of God's works on earth,—let all your acts attach your manhood to the idea of Him, to whom the voice of the bell appeals. Ah ! the bell is hushed ; but not your heart, Tom,—that speaks still."

Tom was weeping like a child.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOW when our two travellers resumed their journey, the relationship between them had undergone a change ; nay, you might have said that their characters were also changed. For Tom found himself pouring out his turbulent heart to Kenelm, confiding to this philosophical scoffer at love all the passionate humanities of love—its hope, its anguish, its jealousy, its wrath—the all that links the gentlest of emotions to tragedy and terror. And Kenelm, listening tenderly, with softened eyes, uttered not one cynic word—nay, not one playful jest. He felt that the gravity of all he heard was too solemn for mockery too deep even for comfort. True love of this sort was a thing he had never known, never wished to know, never thought he could know, but he sympathised in it not the less. Strange, indeed, how much we do sympathise, on the stage, for instance, or in a book, with passions that have never agitated ourselves. Had Kenelm jested, or reasoned, or preached, Tom would have shrunk at once into dreary silence ; but Kenelm said nothing, save now and then, as he rested his arm, brother-like, on the strolling man's shoulder, he murmured, "Poor fellow !" So, then, when Tom had finished his confessions, he felt wondrously relieved and comforted. He had cleansed his bosom of the perilous stuff that weighed upon the heart.

Was this good result effected by Kenelm's artful diplomacy, or by that insight into human passions vouchsafed unconsciously to himself, by gleams or in flashes, to this strange

man who surveyed the objects and pursuits of his fellows with a yearning desire to share them, murmuring to himself, "I cannot, I do not stand in this world; like a ghost I glide beside it, and look on"?

Thus the two men continued their way slowly, amid soft pastures and yellowing corn-fields, out at length into the dusty thoroughfares of the main road. That gained, their talk insensibly changed its tone—it became more commonplace, and Kenelm permitted himself the licence of those crotchets by which he extracted a sort of quaint pleasantry out of commonplace itself; so that from time to time Tom was startled into the mirth of laughter. This big fellow had one very agreeable gift, which is only granted, I think, to men of genuine character and affectionate dispositions—a spontaneous and sweet laugh, manly and frank, but not boisterous, as you might have supposed it would be. But that sort of laugh had not before come from his lips, since the day on which his love for Jessie Wiles had made him at war with himself and the world.

The sun was setting when from the brow of a hill they beheld the spires of Luscombe, embedded amid the level meadows that stretched below, watered by the same stream that had wound along their more rural pathway, but which now expanded into stately width, and needed, to span it, a mighty bridge fit for the convenience of civilized traffic. The town seemed near, but it was full two miles off by road.

"There is a short cut across the fields beyond that stile, which leads straight to my uncle's house," said Tom; "and I dare say, sir, that you will be glad to escape the dirty suburb by which the road passes before we get into the town."

"A good thought, Tom. It is very odd that fine towns always are approached by dirty suburbs—a covert symbolical satire, perhaps, on the ways to success in fine towns. Avarice or ambition go through very mean little streets before they gain the place which they jostle the crowd to win—in the Townhall or on 'Change. Happy the man who, like you, Tom, finds that there is a shorter and a cleaner and a plea-

santer way to goal or to resting-place than that through the dirty suburbs !”

They met but few passengers on their path through the fields—a respectable, staid, elderly couple, who had the air of a Dissenting minister and his wife ; a girl of fourteen leading a little boy seven years younger by the hand ; a pair of lovers, evidently lovers at least to the eye of Tom Bowles—for, on regarding them as they passed unheeding him, he winced, and his face changed. Even after they had passed, Kenelm saw on the face that pain lingered there ; the lips were tightly compressed, and their corners gloomily drawn down.

Just at this moment a dog rushed towards them with a short quick bark—a Pomeranian dog with pointed nose and pricked ears. It hushed its bark as it neared Kenelm, sniffed his trousers, and wagged its tail.

“By the sacred Nine,” cried Kenelm, “thou art the dog with the tin tray ! where is thy master ?”

The dog seemed to understand the question, for it turned its head significantly, and Kenelm saw, seated under a lime tree, at a good distance from the path, a man, with book in hand, evidently employed in sketching.

“Come this way,” he said to Tom ; “I recognise an acquaintance. You will like him.” Tom desired no new acquaintance at that moment, but he followed Kenelm submissively.

CHAPTER IX.

“YOU see we are fated to meet again,” said Kenelm, stretching himself at his ease beside the Wandering Minstrel, and motioning Tom to do the same. “But you seem to add the accomplishment of drawing to that of verse-making ! You sketch from what you call Nature ?”

“From what I call Nature ! yes, sometimes.”

“And do you not find in drawing, as in verse-making, the truth that I have before sought to din into your reluctant ears

—viz., that Nature has no voice except that which man breathes into her out of his mind? I would lay a wager that the sketch you are now taking is rather an attempt to make her embody some thought of your own, than to present her outlines as they appear to any other observer. Permit me to judge for myself." And he bent over the sketch-book. It is often difficult for one who is not himself an artist nor a connoisseur, to judge whether the pencilled jottings in an impromptu sketch are by the hand of a professed master or a mere amateur. Kenelm was neither artist nor connoisseur, but the mere pencil-work seemed to him much what might be expected from any man with an accurate eye, who had taken a certain number of lessons from a good drawing-master. It was enough for him, however, that it furnished an illustration of his own theory. "I was right," he cried, triumphantly. "From this height there is a beautiful view, as it presents itself to me; a beautiful view of the town, its meadows, its river, harmonised by the sunset; for sunset, like gilding, unites conflicting colours, and softens them in uniting. But I see nothing of that view in your sketch. What I do see is to me mysterious."

"The view you suggest," said the minstrel, "is no doubt very fine, but it is for a Turner or a Claude to treat it. My grasp is not wide enough for such a landscape."

"I see indeed in your sketch but one figure, a child."

"Hist! there she stands. Hist! while I put in this last touch."

Kenelm strained his sight, and saw far off a solitary little girl, who was tossing something in the air (he could not distinguish what), and catching it as it fell. She seemed standing on the very verge of the upland, backed by rose-clouds gathered round the setting sun; below lay in confused outlines the great town. In the sketch those outlines seemed infinitely more confused, being only indicated by a few bold strokes; but the figure and face of the child were distinct and lovely. There was an ineffable sentiment in her solitude, there was a depth of quiet enjoyment in her mirthful play, and in her upturned eyes.

"But at that distance," asked Kenelm, when the wanderer had finished his last touch, and, after contemplating it, silently closed his book, and turned round with a genial smile—"but

at that distance, how can you distinguish the girl's face? How can you discover that the dim object she has just thrown up and recaught is a ball made of flowers? Do you know the child?"

"I never saw her before this evening; but as I was seated here she was straying around me alone, weaving into chains some wild-flowers which she had gathered by the hedgerows yonder, next the high road; and as she strung them she was chanting to herself some pretty nursery rhymes. You can well understand that when I heard her thus chanting I became interested, and as she came near me I spoke to her, and we soon made friends. She told me she was an orphan, and brought up by a very old man distantly related to her, who had been in some small trade, and now lived in a crowded lane in the heart of the town. He was very kind to her, and being confined himself to the house by age or ailment he sent her out to play in the fields on summer Sundays. She had no companions of her own age. She said she did not like the other little girls in the lane; and the only little girl she liked at school had a grander station in life, and was not allowed to play with her, and so she came out to play alone; and as long as the sun shines and the flowers bloom, she says she never wants other society."

"Tom, do you hear that? As you will be residing in Luscombe, find out this strange little girl, and be kind to her, Tom, for my sake."

Tom put his large hand upon Kenelm's, making no other answer; but he looked hard at the minstrel, recognised the genial charm of his voice and face, and slid along the grass nearer to him.

The minstrel continued: "While the child was talking to me I mechanically took the flower-chains from her hands, and not thinking what I was about, gathered them up into a ball. Suddenly she saw what I had done, and instead of scolding me for spoiling her pretty chains, which I richly deserved, was delighted to find I had twisted them into a new play-thing. She ran off with the ball, tossing it about till, excited with her own joy, she got to the brow of the hill, and I began my sketch,"

"Is that charming face you have drawn like hers?"

"No; only in part. I was thinking of another face while I sketched, but it is not like that either; in fact, it is one of those patchworks which we call 'fancy heads,' and I meant it to be another version of a thought that I had just put into rhyme when the child came across me."

"May we hear the rhyme?"

"I fear that if it did not bore yourself it would bore your friend."

"I am sure not. Tom do you sing?"

"Well, I *have* sung," said Tom hanging his head sheepishly, "and I should like to hear this gentleman."

"But I do not know these verses, just made, well enough to sing them; it is enough if I can recall them well enough to recite." Here the minstrel paused a minute or so as if for recollection, and then, in the sweet clear tones, and the rare purity of enunciation which characterised his utterance, whether in recital or song, gave to the following verses a touching and a varied expression which no one could discover in merely reading them.

THE FLOWER-GIRL BY THE CROSSING.

"By the muddy crossing in the crowded streets
Stands a little maid with her basket full of posies,
Proffering all who pass her choice of knitted sweets,
Tempting Age with heart's-ease, courting Youth with roses.

"Age disdains the heart's-ease,
Love rejects the roses;
London life is busy—
Who can stop for posies?"

"One man is too grave, another is too gay—
This man has his hothouse, that man not a penny;
Flowerets too are common in the month of May,
And the things most common least attract the many.

"Ill on London crossings
Fares the sale of posies;
Age disdains the heart's-ease,
Youth rejects the roses."

When the verse-maker had done, he did not pause for approbation, nor look modestly down, as do most people who recite their own verses, but unaffectedly thinking much more

of his art than his audience, hurried on somewhat disconsolately—

“I see with great grief that I am better at sketching than rhyming. Can you” (appealing to Kenelm) “even comprehend what I mean by the verses?”

KENELM.—“Do you comprehend, Tom?”

TOM (in a whisper).—“No.”

KENELM.—“I presume that by his flower-girl our friend means to represent not only poetry, but a poetry like his own, which is not at all the sort of poetry now in fashion. I, however, expand his meaning, and by his flower-girl I understand any image of natural truth or beauty for which, when we are living the artificial life of crowded streets, we are too busy to give a penny.”

“Take it as you please,” said the minstrel, smiling and sighing at the same time; “but I have not expressed in words that which I did mean half so well as I have expressed it in my sketch-book.”

“Ah! and how?” asked Kenelm.

“The image of my thought in the sketch, be it poetry or whatever you prefer to call it, does not stand forlorn in the crowded streets—the child stands on the brow of the green hill, with the city stretched in confused fragments below, and, thoughtless of pennies and passers-by, she is playing with the flowers she has gathered—but in play casting them heavenward, and following them with heavenward eyes.”

“Good!” muttered Kenelm—“good!” and then, after a long pause, he added, in a still lower mutter, “Pardon me that remark of mine the other day about a beefsteak. But own that I am right—what you call a sketch from Nature is but a sketch of your own thought.”

CHAPTER X.

THE child with the flower-ball had vanished from the brow of the hill; sinking down amid the streets below, the rose-clouds had faded from the horizon; and night was closing round, as the three men entered the thick of the town. Tom pressed Kenelm to accompany him to his uncle's, promising him a hearty welcome and bed and board, but Kenelm declined. He entertained a strong persuasion that it would be better for the desired effect on Tom's mind that he should be left alone with his relations that night, but proposed that they should spend the next day together, and agreed to call at the veterinary surgeon's in the morning.

When Tom quitted them at his uncle's door, Kenelm said to the minstrel, "I suppose you are going to some inn—may I accompany you? We can sup together, and I should like to hear you talk upon poetry and Nature."

"You flatter me much; but I have friends in the town, with whom I lodge, and they are expecting me. Do you not observe that I have changed my dress? I am not known here as the 'Wandering Minstrel.'"

Kenelm glanced at the man's attire, and for the first time observed the change. It was still picturesque in its way, but it was such as gentlemen of the highest rank frequently wear in the country—the knickerbocker costume—very neat, very new, and complete, to the square-toed shoes with their latches and buckles.

"I fear," said Kenelm, gravely, "that your change of dress betokens the neighbourhood of those pretty girls of whom you spoke in an earlier meeting. According to the Darwinian doctrine of selection, fine plumage goes far in deciding the preference of Jenny Wren and her sex, only we are told that fine-feathered birds are very seldom songsters as well. It is rather unfair to rivals when you unite both attractions."

The minstrel laughed. "There is but one girl in my friend's house—his niece; she is very plain, and only thirteen. But

to me the society of women, whether ugly or pretty, is an absolute necessity; and I have been trudging without it for so many days that I can scarcely tell you how my thoughts seemed to shake off the dust of travel when I found myself again in the presence of——”

“Petticoat interest,” interrupted Kenelm. “Take care of yourself. My poor friend with whom you found me is a grave warning against petticoat interest, from which I hope to profit. He is passing through a great sorrow; it might have been worse than sorrow. My friend is going to stay in this town. If you are staying here too, pray let him see something of you. It will do him a wondrous good if you can beguile him from this real life into the gardens of poetland; but do not sing or talk of love to him.”

“I honour all lovers,” said the minstrel, with real tenderness in his tone, “and would willingly serve to cheer or comfort your friend, if I could; but I am bound elsewhere, and must leave Luscombe, which I visit on business—money business—the day after to-morrow.”

“So, too, must I. At least give us both some hours of your time to-morrow.”

“Certainly; from twelve to sunset I shall be roving about—a mere idler. If you will both come with me, it will be a great pleasure to myself. Agreed! Well, then, I will call at your inn to-morrow at twelve; and I recommend for your inn the one facing us—The Golden Lamb. I have heard it recommended for the attributes of civil people and good fare.”

Kenelm felt that he here received his *congé*, and well comprehended the fact that the minstrel, desiring to preserve the secret of his name, did not give the address of the family with whom he was a guest.

“But one word more,” said Kenelm. “Your host or hostess, if resident here, can, no doubt, from your description of the little girl and the old man her protector, learn the child’s address. If so, I should like my companion to make friends with her. Petticoat interest there at least will be innocent and safe. And I know nothing so likely to keep a big, passionate heart like Tom’s, now aching with a horrible void, occupied and softened,

and turned to directions pure and gentle, as an affectionate interest in a little child."

The minstrel changed colour—he even started.

"Sir, are you a wizard that you say that to me?"

"I am not a wizard, but I guess from your question that you have a little child of your own. So much the better; the child may keep you out of much mischief. Remember the little child. Good evening."

Kenelm crossed the threshold of the Golden Lamb, engaged his room, made his ablutions, ordered, and, with his usual zest, partook of his evening meal; and then, feeling the pressure of that melancholic temperament which he so strangely associated with Herculean constitutions, roused himself up, and seeking a distraction from thought, sauntered forth into the gaslit streets.

It was a large handsome town—handsomer than Tor-Hadham, on account of its site in a valley surrounded by wooded hills, and watered by the fair stream whose windings we have seen as a brook—handsomer, also, because it boasted a fair cathedral, well cleared to the sight, and surrounded by venerable old houses, the residences of the clergy, or of the quiet lay gentry with mediæval tastes. The main street was thronged with passengers—some soberly returning home from the evening service—some, the younger, lingering in pleasant promenade with their sweethearts or families, or arm in arm with each other, and having the air of bachelors or maidens unattached. Through this street Kenelm passed with inattentive eye. A turn to the right took him towards the cathedral and its surroundings. There all was solitary. The solitude pleased him, and he lingered long, gazing on the noble church lifting its spires and turrets into the deep blue starry air.

Musingly, then, he strayed on, entering a labyrinth of gloomy lanes, in which, though the shops were closed, many a door stood open, with men of the working class lolling against the threshold, idly smoking their pipes, or women seated on the doorsteps gossiping, while noisy children were playing or quarrelling in the kennel. The whole did not present the indolent side of an English Sabbath in the pleasantest and rosier point of view. Somewhat quickening his steps, he

entered a broader street, attracted to it involuntarily by a bright light in the centre. On nearing the light he found that it shone forth from a gin-palace, of which the mahogany doors opened and shut momentarily as customers went in and out. It was the handsomest building he had seen in his walk, next to that of the cathedral. "The new civilisation *versus* the old," murmured Kenelm. As he so murmured, a hand was laid on his arm with a sort of timid impudence. He looked down and saw a young face, but it had survived the look of youth; it was worn and hard, and the bloom on it was not that of Nature's giving. "Are you kind to-night?" asked a husky voice.

"Kind!" said Kenelm, with mournful tones and softened eyes—"kind! Alas, my poor sister mortal! if pity be kindness, who can see you and not be kind?"

The girl released his arm, and he walked on. She stood some moments gazing after him till out of sight, then she drew her hand suddenly across her eyes, and retracing her steps, was, in her turn, caught hold of by a rougher hand than hers, as she passed the gin-palace. She shook off the grasp with a passionate scorn, and went straight home. Home! is that the right word? Poor sister mortal!

CHAPTER XI.

AND now Kenelm found himself at the extremity of the town, and on the banks of the river. Small squalid houses still lined the bank for some way, till, nearing the bridge, they abruptly ceased, and he passed through a broad square again into the main street. On the other side of the street there was a row of villa-like mansions, with gardens stretching towards the river.

All around in the thoroughfare was silent and deserted. By this time the passengers had gone home. The scent of night-flowers from the villa-gardens came sweet on the starlit

air. Kenelm paused to inhale it, and then lifting his eyes, hitherto downcast, as are the eyes of men in meditative moods, he beheld, on the balcony of the nearest villa, a group of well-dressed persons. The balcony was unusually wide and spacious. On it was a small round table, on which were placed wine and fruits. Three ladies were seated round the table on wire-work chairs, and on the side nearest to Kenelm, one man. In that man, now slightly turning his profile, as if to look towards the river, Kenelm recognised the minstrel. He was still in his picturesque knickerbocker dress, and his clear-cut features, with the clustering curls of hair, and Rubens-like hue and shape of beard, had more than their usual beauty, softened in the light of skies, to which the moon, just risen, added deeper and fuller radiance. The ladies were in evening dress, but Kenelm could not distinguish their faces hidden behind the minstrel. He moved softly across the street, and took his stand behind a buttress in the low wall of the garden, from which he could have full view of the balcony, unseen himself. In this watch he had no other object than that of a vague pleasure. The whole grouping had in it a kind of scenic romance, and he stopped as one stops before a picture.

He then saw that of the three ladies one was old; another was a slight girl of the age of twelve or thirteen; the third appeared to be somewhere about seven or eight and twenty. She was dressed with more elegance than the others. On her neck, only partially veiled by a thin scarf, there was the glitter of jewels; and, as she now turned her full face towards the moon, Kenelm saw that she was very handsome—a striking kind of beauty, calculated to fascinate a poet or an artist—not unlike Raffaele's Fornarina, dark, with warm tints.

Now there appeared at the open window a stout, burly, middle-aged gentleman, looking every inch of him a family man, a moneyed man, sleek and prosperous. He was bald, fresh-coloured, and with light whiskers.

"Holloa," he said, in an accent very slightly foreign, and with a loud clear voice, which Kenelm heard distinctly, "Is it not time for you to come in?"

"Don't be so tiresome, Fritz," said the handsome lady, half petulantly, half playfully, in the way ladies address the tiresome spouses they lord it over. "Your friend has been sulking the whole evening, and is only just beginning to be pleasant as the moon rises."

"The moon has a good effect on poets and other mad folks, I dare say," said the bald man, with a good-humoured laugh. "But I can't have my little niece laid up again just as she is on the mend—Annie, come in."

The girl obeyed reluctantly. The old lady rose too.

"Ah, mother, you are wise," said the bald man; "and a game at *euchre* is safer than poetising in night air." He wound his arm round the old lady with a careful fondness, for she moved with some difficulty as if rather lame. "As for you two sentimentalists and moongazers, I give you ten minutes' law—not more, mind."

"Tyrant!" said the minstrel.

The balcony now held only two forms—the minstrel and the handsome lady. The window was closed, and partially veiled by muslin draperies, but Kenelm caught glimpses of the room within. He could see that the room, lit by a lamp on the centre table, and candles elsewhere, was decorated and fitted up with cost, and in a taste not English. He could see, for instance, that the ceiling was painted, and the walls were not papered, but painted in panels between arabesque pilasters.

"They are foreigners," thought Kenelm, "though the man does speak English so well. That accounts for playing *euchre* of a Sunday evening, as if there were no harm in it. *Euchre* is an American game. The man is called Fritz. Ah! I guess—Germans who have lived a good deal in America; and the verse-maker said he was at Luscombe on pecuniary business. Doubtless his host is a merchant, and the verse-maker in some commercial firm. That accounts for his concealment of name, and fear of its being known that he was addicted, in his holiday, to tastes and habits so opposed to his calling."

While he was thus thinking, the lady had drawn her chair close to the minstrel, and was speaking to him with evident earnestness, but in tones too low for Kenelm to hear. Still it

seemed to him, by her manner and by the man's look as if she were speaking in some sort of reproach, which he sought to deprecate. Then he spoke, also in a whisper, and she averted her face for a moment—then she held out her hand, and the minstrel kissed it. Certainly, thus seen, the two might well be taken for lovers; and the soft night, the fragrance of the flowers, silence and solitude, stars and moonlight, all girt them as with an atmosphere of love. Presently the man rose and leaned over the balcony, propping his cheek on his hand, and gazing on the river. The lady rose too, and also leaned over the balustrade, her dark hair almost touching the auburn locks of her companion.

Kenelm sighed. Was it from envy, from pity, from fear? I know not; but he sighed.

After a brief pause, the lady said, still in low tones, but not too low this time to escape Kenelm's fine sense of hearing—

"Tell me those verses again. I must remember every word of them when you are gone."

The man shook his head gently, and answered, but inaudibly.

"Do," said the lady, "set them to music later; and the next time you come I will sing them. I have thought of a title for them,"

"What?" asked the minstrel.

"Love's quarrel."

The minstrel turned his head, and their eyes met, and, in meeting, lingered long. Then he moved away, and with face turned from her and towards the river, gave the melody of his wondrous voice to the following lines:—

LOVE'S QUARREL,

"Standing by the river, gazing on the river,
See it paved with starbeams; heaven is at our feet,
Now the wave is troubled, now the rushes quiver;
Vanished is the starlight—it was a deceit.

"Comes a little cloudlet 'twixt ourselves and heaven,
And from all the river fades the silver track;
Put thine arms around me, whisper low, 'Forgiven!'—
See how on the river starlight settles back."

When he had finished, still with face turned aside, the lady did not, indeed, whisper "Forgiven," nor put her arms around

him ; but, as if by irresistible impulse, she laid her hand lightly on his shoulder.

The minstrel started.

There came to his ear—he knew not from whence, from whom—

“Mischief—mischief! Remember the little child!”

“Hush!” he said, staring round. “Did you not hear a voice?”

“Only yours,” said the lady.

“It was our guardian angel’s, Amalie. It came in time. We will go within.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE next morning betimes Kenelm visited Tom at his uncle’s home. A comfortable and respectable home it was, like that of an owner in easy circumstances. The veterinary surgeon himself was intelligent, and apparently educated beyond the range of his calling ; a childless widower, between sixty and seventy, living with a sister, an old maid. They were evidently much attached to Tom, and delighted by the hope of keeping him with them. Tom himself looked rather sad, but not sullen, and his face brightened wonderfully at first sight of Kenelm. That oddity made himself as pleasant and as much like other people as he could in conversing with the old widower and the old maid, and took leave, engaging Tom to be at his inn at half past twelve, and spend the day with him and the minstrel. He then returned to the Golden Lamb, and waited there for his first visitant, the minstrel.

That votary of the muse arrived punctually at twelve o’clock. His countenance was less cheerful and sunny than usual. Kenelm made no allusion to the scene he had witnessed, nor did his visitor seem to suspect that Kenelm had witnessed it or been the utterer of that warning voice.

KENELM.—“I have asked my friend Tom Bowles to come a little later, because I wished you to be of use to him, and in order to be so, I should suggest how.”

THE MINSTREL.—“Pray do.”

KENELM.—“You know that I am not a poet, and I do not have much reverence for verse-making, merely as a craft.”

THE MINSTREL.—“Neither have I.”

KENELM.—“But I have a great reverence for poetry as a priesthood. I felt that reverence for you when you sketched and talked priesthood last evening, and placed in my heart—I hope for ever while it beats—the image of the child on the sunlit hill, high above the abodes of men, tossing her flowerball heavenward, and with heavenward eyes.”

The singer's cheek coloured high, and his lip quivered; he was very sensitive to praise—most singers are.

Kenelm resumed, “I have been educated in the Realistic school, and with realism I am discontented, because in realism as a school there is no truth. It contains but a bit of truth, and that the coldest and hardest bit of it, and he who utters a bit of truth and suppresses the rest of it, tells a lie.”

THE MINSTREL (slyly).—“Does the critic who says to me, ‘Sing of beefsteak, because the appetite for food is a real want of daily life, and don’t sing of art and glory and love, because in daily life a man may do without such ideas,’—tell a lie?”

KENELM.—“Thank you for that rebuke. I submit to it. No doubt I did tell a lie—that is, if I were quite in earnest in my recommendation; and if not in earnest, why——”

THE MINSTREL.—“You belied yourself.”

KENELM.—“Very likely. I set out on my travels to escape from shams, and begin to discover that I am a sham *par excellence*. But I suddenly come across you, as a boy dulled by his syntax and his vulgar fractions suddenly comes across a pleasant poem or a picture-book, and feels his wits brighten up. I owe you much; you have done me a world of good.”

“I cannot guess how.”

“Possibly not, but you have shown me how the realism of Nature herself takes colour and life and soul when seen on the ideal or poetic side of it. It is not exactly the words that you say or sing that do me the good, but they awaken within me new trains of thought, which I seek to follow out. The best teacher is the one who suggests rather than dogmatizes, and

inspires his listener with the wish to teach himself. Therefore, O singer! whatever be the worth in critical eyes of your songs, I am glad to remember that you would like to go through the world always singing."

"Pardon me; you forget that I added, 'if life were always young, and the seasons were always summer.'"

"I do not forget. But if youth and summer fade for you, you leave youth and summer behind you as you pass along—behind in hearts which mere realism would make always old, and counting their slothful beats under the grey of a sky without sun or stars; wherefore I pray you to consider how magnificent a mission the singer's is—to harmonise your life with your song, and toss your flowers, as your child does, heavenward, with heavenward eyes. Think only of this when you talk with my sorrowing friend, and you will do him good, as you have done me, without being able to guess how a seeker after the Beautiful, such as you, carries us along with him on his way; so that we, too, look out for beauty, and see it in the wild flowers to which we had been blind before."

Here Tom entered the little sanded parlour where this dialogue had been held, and the three men sallied forth, taking the shortest cut from the town into the fields and woodlands.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHETHER or not his spirits were raised by Kenelm's praise and exhortations, the minstrel that day talked with a charm that spellbound Tom, and Kenelm was satisfied with brief remarks on his side tending to draw out the principal performer.

The talk was drawn from outward things, from natural objects—objects that interest children, and men who, like Tom Bowles, have been accustomed to view surroundings more with the heart's eye than the mind's eye. This rover about the country knew much of the habits of birds and beasts and insects, and told anecdotes of them with a mixture of humour and pathos,

which fascinated Tom's attention, made him laugh heartily, and sometimes brought tears into his big blue eyes.

They dined at an inn by the wayside, and the dinner was mirthful; then they wended their way slowly back. By the declining daylight their talk grew somewhat graver, and Kenelm took more part in it. Tom listened mute—still fascinated. At length, as the town came in sight, they agreed to halt a while, in a bosky nook soft with mosses and sweet with wild thyme.

There, as they lay stretched at their ease, the birds hymning vesper songs amid the boughs above, or dropping, noiseless and fearless, for their evening food on the swards around them, the wanderer said to Kenelm—"You tell me that you are no poet, yet I am sure you have a poet's perception; you must have written poetry?"

"Not I; as I before told you, only school verses in dead languages; but I found in my knapsack this morning a copy of some rhymes, made by a fellow collegian, which I put into my pocket meaning to read them to you both. They are not verses like yours, which evidently burst from you spontaneously, and are not imitated from any other poets. These verses were written by a Scotchman, and smack of imitation from the old ballad style. There is little to admire in the words themselves, but there is something in the idea which struck me as original, and impressed me sufficiently to keep a copy, and somehow or other it got into the leaves of one of the two books I carried with me from home."

"What are those books? Books of poetry both, I will venture to wager——"

"Wrong! Both metaphysical, and dry as a bone. Tom, light your pipe, and you, sir, lean more at ease on your elbow; I should warn you that the ballad is long. Patience!"

"Attention!" said the minstrel.

"Fire!" added Tom.

Kenelm began to read—and he read well—

LORD RONALD'S BRIDE.

PART I.

"WHY gathers the crowd in the market-place
Ere the stars have yet left the sky?"

"For a holiday show and an act of grace—
At the sunrise a witch shall die."

"What deed has she done to deserve that doom—
Has she blighted the standing corn,
Or rifled for philtres a dead man's tomb,
Or rid mothers of babes new-born?"

"Her pact with the fiend was not thus revealed,
She taught sinners the Word to hear;
The hungry she fed, and the sick she healed,
And was held as a Saint last year.

"But a holy man, who at Rome had been,
Had discovered, by book and bell,
That the marvels she wrought were through arts unclean,
And the lies of the Prince of Hell.

"And our Mother the Church, for the dame was rich,
And her husband was Lord of Clyde,
Would fain have been mild to this saint-like witch
If her sins she had not denied.

"But hush, and come nearer to see the sight,
Sheriff, halberds, and torchmen—look!
That's the witch standing mute in her garb of white,
By the priest with his bell and book."

So the witch was consumed on the sacred pyre,
And the priest grew in power and pride,
And the witch left a son to succeed his sire
In the halls and the lands of Clyde.

And the infant waxed comely and strong and brave,
But his manhood had scarce begun,
When his vessel was launched on the northern wave,
To the shores which are near the sun.

PART II.

Lord Ronald has come to his halls in Clyde
With a bride of some unknown race;
Compared with the man who would kiss that bride
Wallace wight were a coward base.

Her eyes had the glare of the mountain-cat
When it springs on the hunter's spear;
At the head of the board when that lady sate
Hungry men could not eat for fear.

And the tones of her voice had that deadly growl
Of the bloodhound that scents its prey ;
No storm was so dark as that lady's scowl
Under tresses of wintry grey.

"Lord Ronald ! men marry for love or gold,
Mickle rich must have been thy bride !"
"Man's heart may be bought, woman's hand be sold,
On the banks of our northern Clyde.

"My bride is, in sooth, mickle rich to me
Though she brought not a groat in dower,
For her face, couldst thou see it as I do see,
Is the fairest in hall or bower !"

Quoth the bishop one day to our lord the king,
Satan reigns on the Clyde alway,
And the taint in the blood of the witch doth cling
To the child that she brought to-day.

"Lord Ronald hath come from the Paynim land
With a bride that appals the sight ;
Like his dam she hath moles on her dread right hand,
And she turns to a snake at night.

"It is plain that a Scot who can blindly dote
On the face of an Eastern ghoul,
And a ghoul who was worth not a silver groat,
Is a Scot who has lost his soul.

"It were wise to have done with this demon tree
Which has teemed with such cankered fruit ;
Add the soil where it stands to my holy See,
And consign to the flames its root."

"Holy man !" quoth King James, and he laughed, "we know
That thy tongue never wags in vain,
But the Church cist is full, and the king's is low,
And the Clyde is a fair domain.

"Yet a knight that's bewitched by a laidly fere
Needs not much to dissolve the spell ;
We will summon the bride and the bridegroom here,
Be at hand with thy book and bell."

PART III.

Lord Ronald stood up in King James's court,
And his dame by his dauntless side ;
The barons who came in the hopes of sport
Shook with fright when they saw the bride.

The bishop, though armed with his bell and book,
Grew as white as if turned to stone,
It was only our king who could face that look,
But he spoke with a trembling tone :

"Lord Ronald, the knights of thy race and mine
Should have mates in their own degree ;
What parentage, say, hath that bride of thine
Who hath come from the far countree ?

“And what was her dowry in gold or land,
Or what was the charm, I pray,
That a comely young gallant should woo the hand
Of the ladye we see to-day?”

And the lords would have laughed, but that awful dame
Struck them dumb with her thunder-frown :
“Saucy king, did I utter my father’s name,
Thou wouldst kneel as his liegeman down.

“Though I brought to Lord Ronald nor lands nor gold,
Nor the bloom of a fading cheek ;
Yet, were I a widow, both young and old
Would my hand and my dowry seek.

“For the wish that he covets the most below,
And would hide from the saints above,
Which he dares not to pray for in weal or woe,
Is the dowry I bring my love.

“Let every man look in his heart and see
What the wish he most lusts to win,
And then let him fasten his eyes on me
While he thinks of his darling sin.”

And every man,—bishop, and lord, and king,—
Thought of what he most wished to win,
And, fixing his eye on that gruesome thing,
He beheld his own darling sin.

No longer a ghoul in that face he saw,
It was fair as a boy’s first love ;
The voice that had curdled his veins with awe
Was the coo of the woodland dove.

Each heart was on flame for the peerless dame
At the price of the husband’s life ;
Bright claymores flash out, and loud voices shout
“In thy widow shall be my wife.”

Then darkness fell over the palace hall,
More dark and more dark it fell,
And a death-groan boomed hoarse underneath the pall,
And was drowned amid roar and yell.

When light through the lattice-pane stole once more,
It was grey as a wintry dawn,
And the bishop lay cold on the regal floor,
With a stain on his robes of lawn.

Lord Ronald was standing beside the dead,
In the scabbard he plunged his sword,
And with visage as wan as the corpse, he said,
“Lo ! my ladye hath kept her word.

“Now I leave her to others to woo and win,
For no longer I find her fair ;
Could I look on the face of my darling sin,
I should see but a dead man’s there.

"And the dowry she brought me is here returned,
For the wish of my heart has died,
It is quenched in the blood of the priest who burned
My sweet mother, the Saint of Clyde."

Lord Ronald strode over the stony floor,
Not a hand was outstretched to stay ;
Lord Ronald has passed through the gaping door,
Not an eye ever traced the way.

And the ladye, left widowed, was prized above
All the maidens in hall and bower,
Many bartered their lives for that ladye's love,
And their souls for that ladye's dower.

God grant that the wish which I dare not pray
Be not that which I lust to win,
And that ever I look with my first dismay
On the face of my darling sin !

As he ceased, Kenelm's eye fell on Tom's face upturned to his own, with open lips, an intent stare, and paled cheeks, and a look of that higher sort of terror which belongs to awe. The man, then recovering himself, tried to speak, and attempted a sickly smile, but neither would do. He rose abruptly and walked away, crept under the shadow of a dark beech-tree, and stood there leaning against the trunk.

"What say you to the ballad ?" asked Kenelm of the singer.

"It is not without power," answered he.

"Ay, of a certain kind."

The minstrel looked hard at Kenelm, and dropped his eyes, with a heightened glow on his cheek.

"The Scotch are a thoughtful race. The Scot who wrote this thing may have thought of a day when he saw beauty in the face of a darling sin ; but if so, it is evident that his sight recovered from that glamour. Shall we walk on ? Come, Tom."

The minstrel left them at the entrance of the town, saying, "I regret that I cannot see more of either of you, as I quit Luscombe at daybreak. Here, by the by, I forgot to give it before, is the address you wanted."

KENELM.—"Of the little child. I am glad you remembered her."

The minstrel again looked hard at Kenelm, this time without dropping his eyes. Kenelm's expression of face was so simply quiet that it might be almost called vacant.

Kenelm and Tom continued to walk on towards the veterinary surgeon's house, for some minutes silently. Then Tom said in a whisper, "Did you not mean those rhymes to hit me here—*here*," and he struck his breast.

"The rhymes were written long before I saw you, Tom; but it is well if their meaning strike us all. Of you, my friend, I have no fear now. Are you not already a changed man?"

"I feel as if I were going through a change," answered Tom, in slow, dreary accents. "In hearing you and that gentleman talk so much of things that I never thought of, I felt something in me—you will laugh when I tell you—something like a bird."

"Like a bird—good!—a bird has wings."

"Just so."

"And you felt wings that you were unconscious of before, fluttering and beating themselves as against the wires of a cage. You were true to your instincts then, my dear fellow-man—instincts of space and Heaven. Courage!—the cage-door will open soon. And now, practically speaking, I give you this advice in parting: you have a quick and sensitive mind which you have allowed that strong body of yours to incarcerate and suppress. Give that mind fair play. Attend to the business of your calling diligently: the craving for regular work is the healthful appetite of mind; but in your spare hours cultivate the new ideas which your talk with men who have been accustomed to cultivate the mind more than the body, has sown within you. Belong to a book-club, and interest yourself in books. A wise man has said, 'Books widen the present by adding to it the past and the future.' Seek the company of educated men and educated women too; and when you are angry with another, reason with him—don't knock him down; and don't be knocked down yourself by an enemy much stronger than yourself—Drink. Do all this, and when I see you again you will be——"

"Stop, sir—you will see me again?"

"Yes, if we both live, I promise it."

"When?"

"You see, Tom, we have both of us something in our old selves which we must work off. You will work off your

something by repose, and I must work off mine, if I can, by moving about. So I am on my travels. May we both have new selves better than the old selves, when we again shake hands. For your part try your best, dear Tom, and Heaven prosper you."

"And Heaven bless you!" cried Tom, fervently, with tears rolling unheeded from his bold blue eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

THOUGH Kenelm left Luscombe on Tuesday morning, he did not appear at Neesdale Park till the Wednesday, a little before the dressing-bell for dinner. His adventures in the interim are not worth repeating. He had hoped he might fall in again with the minstrel, but he did not.

His portmanteau had arrived, and he heaved a sigh as he cased himself in a gentleman's evening dress, "Alas! I have soon got back again into my own skin."

There were several other guests in the house, though not a large party. They had been asked with an eye to the approaching election, consisting of squires and clergy from remoter parts of the county. Chief among the guests in rank and importance, and rendered by the occasion the central object of interest, was George Belvoir.

Kenelm bore his part in this society with a resignation that partook of repentance.

The first day he spoke very little, and was considered a very dull young man by the lady he took in to dinner. Mr. Travers in vain tried to draw him out. He had anticipated much amusement from the eccentricities of his guest, who had talked volubly enough in the fernery, and was sadly disappointed. "I feel," he whispered to Mrs. Campion, "like poor Lord Pomfret, who, charmed with Punch's lively conversation, bought him, and was greatly surprised that, when he had once brought him home, Punch would not talk."

"But your Punch listens," said Mrs. Campion, "and he observes."

George Belvoir, on the other hand, was universally declared to be very agreeable. Though not naturally jovial, he forced himself to appear so—laughing loud with the squires, and entering heartily with their wives and daughters into such topics as county-balls and croquet-parties; and when after dinner he had, Cato-like, 'warmed his virtue with wine,' the virtue came out very lustily in praise of good men—viz., men of his own party,—and anathema on bad men—viz., men of the other party.

Now and then he appealed to Kenelm, and Kenelm always returned the same answer, "There is much in what you say."

The first evening closed in the usual way in country-houses. There was some lounging under moonlight on the terrace before the house; then there was some singing by young lady amateurs, and a rubber of whist for the elders; then wine-and-water, hand-candlesticks, a smoking-room for those who smoked, and bed for those who did not.

In the course of the evening, Cecilia, partly in obedience to the duties of hostess, and partly from that compassion for shyness which kindly and high-bred persons entertain, had gone a little out of her way to allure Kenelm forth from the estranged solitude he had contrived to weave around him. In vain for the daughter as for the father. He replied to her with the quiet self-possession which should have convinced her that no man on earth was less entitled to indulgence for the gentlemanlike infirmity of shyness, and no man less needed the duties of any hostess for the augmentation of his comforts, or rather for his diminished sense of discomfort; but his replies were in monosyllables, and made with the air of a man who says in his heart, "If this creature would but leave me alone!"

Cecilia, for the first time in her life, was piqued, and, strange to say, began to feel more interest about this indifferent stranger than about the popular, animated, pleasant George Belvoir, who she knew by womanly instinct was as much in love with her as he could be.

Cecilia Travers that night on retiring to rest told her maid,

smilingly, that she was too tired to have her hair done ; and yet, when the maid was dismissed, she looked at herself in the glass more gravely and more discontentedly than she had ever looked there before ; and, tired though she was, stood at the window gazing into the moonlit night for a good hour after the maid left her.

CHAPTER XV.

KENELM CHILLINGLY has now been several days a guest at Neesdale Park. He has recovered speech ; the other guests have gone, including George Belvoir. Leopold Travers has taken a great fancy to Kenelm. Leopold was one of those men, not uncommon perhaps in England, who, with great mental energies, have little book-knowledge, and when they come in contact with a book-reader who is not a pedant, feel a pleasant excitement in his society, a source of interest in comparing notes with him, a constant surprise in finding by what venerable authorities the deductions which their own mother-wit has drawn from life are supported ; or by what cogent arguments derived from books, those deductions are contravened or upset. Leopold Travers had in him that sense of humour which generally accompanies a strong practical understanding (no man, for instance, has more practical understanding than a Scot, and no man has a keener susceptibility to humour), and not only enjoyed Kenelm's odd way of expressing himself, but very often mistook Kenelm's irony for opinion spoken in earnest.

Since his early removal from the capital and his devotion to agricultural pursuits, it was so seldom that Leopold Travers met a man by whose conversation his mind was diverted to other subjects than those which were incidental to the commonplace routine of his life, that he found in Kenelm's views of men and things a source of novel amusement, and a stirring appeal to such metaphysical creeds of his own as had been formed unconsciously, and had long reposed unexamined in

the recesses of an intellect shrewd and strong, but more accustomed to dictate than to argue. Kenelm, on his side, saw much in his host to like and to admire; but, reversing their relative positions in point of years, he conversed with Travers as with a mind younger than his own. Indeed, it was one of his crotchety theories that each generation is in substance mentally older than the generation preceding it, especially in all that relates to science; and, as he would say, "The study of life is a science, and not an art."

But Cecilia,—what impression did she create upon the young visitor? Was he alive to the charm of her rare beauty, to the grace of a mind sufficiently stored for commune with those who love to think and to imagine, and yet sufficiently feminine and playful to seize the sportive side of realities, and allow their proper place to the trifles which make the sum of human things? An impression she did make, and that impression was new to him and pleasing. Nay, sometimes in her presence, and sometimes when alone, he fell into abstracted consultations with himself, saying, "Kenelm Chillingly, now that thou hast got back into thy proper skin, dost thou not think that thou hadst better remain there? Couldst thou not be contented with thy lot as erring descendant of Adam, if thou couldst win for thy mate so faultless a descendant of Eve as now flits before thee?" But he could not abstract from himself any satisfactory answer to the question he had addressed to himself.

Once he said abruptly to Travers, as, on their return from their rambles, they caught a glimpse of Cecilia's light form bending over the flower-beds on the lawn, "Do you admire Virgil?"

"To say truth I have not read Virgil since I was a boy; and between you and me, I then thought him rather monotonous."

"Perhaps because his verse is so smooth in its beauty?"

"Probably. When one is very young one's taste is faulty; and if a poet is not faulty, we are apt to think he wants vivacity and fire."

"Thank you for your lucid explanation," answered Kenelm, adding musingly to himself, "I am afraid I should yawn very often if I were married to a Miss Virgil."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE house of Mr. Travers contained a considerable collection of family portraits, few of them well painted, but the Squire was evidently proud of such evidences of ancestry. They not only occupied a considerable space on the walls of the reception rooms, but swarmed into the principal sleeping chambers, and smiled or frowned on the beholder from dark passages and remote lobbies. One morning, Cecilia, on her way to the china closet, found Kenelm gazing very intently upon a female portrait consigned to one of those obscure receptacles by which through a back staircase he gained the only approach from the hall to his chamber.

"I don't pretend to be a good judge of paintings," said Kenelm, as Cecilia paused beside him; "but it strikes me that this picture is very much better than most of those to which places of honour are assigned in your collection. And the face itself is so lovely, that it would add an embellishment to the princeliest galleries."

"Yes," said Cecilia, with a half-sigh. "The face is lovely, and the portrait is considered one of Lely's rarest masterpieces. It used to hang over the chimney-piece in the drawing-room. My father had it placed here many years ago."

"Perhaps because he discovered it was not a family portrait?"

"On the contrary—because it grieves him to think it is a family portrait. Hush! I hear his footstep; don't speak of it to him; don't let him see you looking at it. The subject is very painful to him."

Here Cecilia vanished into the china closet and Kenelm turned off to his own room.

What sin committed by the original in the time of Charles II., but only discovered in the reign of Victoria, could have justified Leopold Travers in removing the most pleasing portrait in the house from the honoured place it had occupied, and banishing it to so obscure a recess? Kenelm said no more on the subject, and indeed an hour afterwards had dismissed it from his thoughts.

The next day he rode out with Travers and Cecilia. Their way passed through quiet shady lanes without any purposed direction, when suddenly, at the spot where three of those lanes met on an angle of common ground, a lonely grey tower, in the midst of a wide space of grass land which looked as if it had once been a park, with huge boles of pollarded oak dotting the space here and there, rose before them.

"Cissy!" cried Travers, angrily reining in his horse and stopping short in a political discussion which he had forced upon Kenelm—"Cissy! How comes this? We have taken the wrong turn! No matter, I see there," pointing to the right, "the chimney-pots of old Mondell's homestead. He has not yet promised his vote to George Belvoir. I'll go and have a talk with him. Turn back, you and Mr. Chillingly—meet me at Turner's Green, and wait for me there till I come. I need not excuse myself to you, Chillingly. A vote is a vote." So saying, the Squire, whose ordinary riding-horse was an old hunter, halted, turned, and, no gate being visible, put the horse over a stiff fence and vanished in the direction of old Mondell's chimney-pots. Kenelm, scarcely hearing his host's instructions to Cecilia and excuses to himself, remained still and gazing on the old tower thus abruptly obtruded on his view.

Though no learned antiquarian like his father, Kenelm had a strange fascinating interest in all relics of the past; and old grey towers, where they are not church towers, are very rarely to be seen in England. All around the old grey tower spoke with an unutterable mournfulness of a past in ruins: you could see remains of some large Gothic building once attached to it, rising here and there in fragments of deeply-buttressed walls; you could see in a dry ditch, between high ridges, where there had been a fortified moat: nay, you could even see where once had been the bailey hill from which a baron of old had dispensed justice. Seldom indeed does the most acute of antiquarians discover that remnant of Norman times on lands still held by the oldest of Anglo-Norman families. Then, the wild nature of the demesne around; those ranges of sward, with those old giant oak-trunks, hollowed within and pollarded at top; all spoke, in unison with the grey tower, of a past as

remote from the reign of Victoria as the Pyramids are from the sway of the Viceroy of Egypt.

"Let us turn back," said Miss Travers; "my father would not like me to stay here."

"Pardon me a moment. I wish my father were here; he would stay till sunset. But what is the history of that old tower?—a history it must have."

"Every home has a history—even a peasant's hut," said Cecilia. "But do pardon me if I ask you to comply with my father's request. I at least must turn back."

Thus commanded, Kenelm reluctantly withdrew his gaze from the ruin and regained Cecilia, who was already some paces in return down the lane.

"I am far from a very inquisitive man by temperament," said Kenelm, "so far as the affairs of the living are concerned. But I should not care to open a book if I had no interest in the past. Pray indulge my curiosity to learn something about that old tower. It could not look more melancholy and solitary if I had built it myself."

"Its most melancholy associations are with a very recent past," answered Cecilia. "The tower, in remote times, formed the keep of a castle belonging to the most ancient and once the most powerful family in these parts. The owners were barons who took active share in the Wars of the Roses. The last of them sided with Richard III., and after the battle of Bosworth the title was attainted, and the larger portion of the lands were confiscated. Loyalty to a Plantagenet was of course treason to a Tudor. But the regeneration of the family rested with their direct descendants, who had saved from the general wreck of their fortunes what may be called a good squire's estate—about, perhaps, the same rental as my father's, but of much larger acreage. These squires, however, were more looked up to in the county than the wealthiest peer. They were still by far the oldest family in the county; and traced in their pedigree alliances with the most illustrious houses in English history. In themselves too, for many generations they were a high-spirited, hospitable, popular race, living unostentatiously on their income, and contented with

their rank of squires. The castle—ruined by time and siege—they did not attempt to restore. They dwelt in a house near to it, built about Elizabeth's time, which you could not see, for it lies in a hollow behind the tower—a moderate-sized picturesque, country gentleman's house. Our family intermarried with them. The portrait you saw was a daughter of their house. And very proud was any squire in the county of intermarriage with the Fletwodes."

"Fletwode—that was their name? I have a vague recollection of having heard the name connected with some disastrous—oh, but it can't be the same family—pray go on."

"I fear it is the same family. But I will finish the story as I have heard it. The property descended at last to one Bertram Fletwode, who, unfortunately, obtained the reputation of being a very clever man of business. There was some mining company in which, with other gentlemen in the county, he took great interest; invested largely in shares; became the head of the direction——"

"I see; and was of course ruined."

"No; worse than that, he became very rich; and, unhappily, became desirous of being richer still. I have heard that there was a great mania for speculations just about that time. He embarked in these, and prospered, till at last he was induced to invest a large share of the fortune thus acquired in the partnership of a bank, which enjoyed a high character. Up to that time he had retained popularity and esteem in the county; but the squires who shared in the adventures of the mining company, and knew little or nothing about other speculations in which his name did not appear, professed to be shocked at the idea of a Fletwode of Fletwode being ostensibly joined in partnership with a Jones, of Clapham, in a London bank."

"Slow folks, those country squires,—behind the progress of the age. Well?"

"I have heard that Bertram Fletwode was himself very reluctant to take this step, but was persuaded to do so by his son. This son, Alfred, was said to have still greater talents for business than the father, and had been not only associated with but consulted by him in all the later speculations which

had proved so fortunate. Mrs. Campion knew Alfred Fletwode very well. She describes him as handsome, with quick, eager eyes; showy and imposing in his talk; immensely ambitious—more ambitious than avaricious,—collecting money less for its own sake than for that which it could give—rank and power. According to her it was the dearest wish of his heart to claim the old barony, but not before there could go with the barony a fortune adequate to the lustre of a title so ancient, and equal to the wealth of modern peers with higher nominal rank.”

“A poor ambition at the best; of the two I should prefer that of a poet in a garret. But I am no judge. Thank Heaven I have no ambition. Still, all ambition, all desire to rise, is interesting to him who is ignominiously contented if he does not fall. So the son had his way, and Fletwode joined company with Jones on the road to wealth and the peerage;—meanwhile did the son marry? if so, of course the daughter of a duke or a millionaire. Tuft-hunting, or money-making, at the risk of degradation and the workhouse. Progress of the age!”

“No,” replied Cecilia, smiling at this outburst, but smiling sadly, “Fletwode did not marry the daughter of a duke or a millionaire; but still his wife belonged to a noble family—very poor, but very proud. Perhaps he married from motives of ambition, though not of gain. Her father was of much political influence that might perhaps assist his claim to the barony. The mother, a woman of the world; enjoying a high social position and nearly related to a connection of ours—Lady Glenalvon.”

“Lady Glenalvon, the dearest of my lady friends! You are connected with her?”

“Yes; Lord Glenalvon was my mother’s uncle. But I wish to finish my story before my father joins us. Alfred Fletwode did not marry till long after the partnership in the bank. His father, at his desire, had bought up the whole business, Mr. Jones having died. The bank was carried on in the names of Fletwode and Son. But the father had become merely a nominal or what I believe is called a ‘sleeping’ partner. He had long ceased to reside in the county. The old house was not grand enough for him. He had purchased a palatial residence

in one of the home counties; lived there in great splendour; was a munificent patron of science and art; and in spite of his earlier addictions to business-like speculations he appears to have been a singularly accomplished, high-bred gentleman. Some years before his son's marriage, Mr. Fletwode had been afflicted with partial paralysis, and his medical attendant enjoined rigid abstention from business. From that time he never interfered with his son's management of the bank. He had an only daughter, much younger than Alfred. Lord Eagleton, my mother's brother, was engaged to be married to her. The wedding-day was fixed—when the world was startled by the news that the great firm of Fletwode and Son had stopped payment,—is that the right phrase?"

"I believe so."

"A great many people were ruined in that failure. The public indignation was very great. Of course all the Fletwode property went to the creditors. Old Mr. Fletwode was legally acquitted of all other offence than that of over-confidence in his son. Alfred was convicted of fraud—of forgery. I don't, of course, know the particulars, they are very complicated. He was sentenced to a long term of servitude, but died the day he was condemned—apparently by poison, which he had long secreted about his person. Now you can understand why my father, who is almost gratuitously sensitive on the point of honour, removed into a dark corner the portrait of Arabella Fletwode,—his own ancestress, but also the ancestress of a convicted felon,—you can understand why the whole subject is so painful to him. His wife's brother was to have married the felon's sister; and though, of course, that marriage was tacitly broken off by the terrible disgrace that had befallen the Fletwodes, yet I don't think my poor uncle ever recovered the blow to his hopes. He went abroad, and died in Madeira, of a slow decline."

"And the felon's sister, did she die too?"

"No; not that I know of. Mrs. Campion says that she saw in a newspaper the announcement of old Mr. Fletwode's death, and a paragraph to the effect that after that event Miss Fletwode had sailed from Liverpool to New York."

"Alfred Fletwode's wife went back, of course, to her family?"

"Alas! no,—poor thing! She had not been many months married when the bank broke; and among his friends her wretched husband appears to have forged the names of the trustees to her marriage settlement, and sold out the sums which would otherwise have served her as a competence. Her father, too, was a great sufferer by the bankruptcy, having by his son-in-law's advice placed a considerable portion of his moderate fortune in Alfred's hands for investment, all of which was involved in the general wreck. I am afraid he was a very hard-hearted man; at all events his poor daughter never returned to him. She died, I think, even before the death of Bertram Fletwode. The whole story is very dismal."

"Dismal indeed, but pregnant with salutary warnings to those who live in an age of progress. Here you see a family of fair fortune, living hospitably, beloved, revered, more looked up to by their neighbours than the wealthiest nobles—no family not proud to boast alliance with it. All at once, in the tranquil record of this happy race, appears that darling of the age, that hero of progress—a clever man of business. He be contented to live as his fathers! He be contented with such trifles as competence, respect, and love! Much too clever for that. The age is money-making—go with the age! He goes with the age. Born a gentleman only, he exalts himself into a trader. But at least he, it seems, if greedy, was not dishonest. He was born a gentleman, but his son was born a trader. The son is a still cleverer man of business; the son is consulted and trusted. Aha! He too goes with the age; to greed he links ambition. The trader's son wishes to return—what? to the rank of gentleman!—gentleman! nonsense! everybody is a gentleman nowadays—to the title of Lord. How ends it all! Could I sit but for twelve hours in the innermost heart of that Alfred Fletwode—could I see how, step by step from his childhood, the dishonest son was avariciously led on by the honest father to depart from the old *vestigia* of Fletwodes of Fletwode—scorning The Enough to covet The More—gaining The More to sigh 'it is not The Enough'—I think I might show that the

age lives in a house of glass, and had better not for its own sake throw stones on the felon!"

"Ah, but, Mr. Chillingly, surely this is a very rare exception in the general——"

"Rare!" interrupted Kenelm, who was excited to a warmth of passion which would have startled his most intimate friend—if indeed an intimate friend had ever been vouchsafed to him—"rare! nay, how common—I don't say to the extent of forgery and fraud, but to the extent of degradation and ruin—is the greed of a Little More to those who have The Enough; is the discontent with competence, respect, and love, when catching sight of a money-bag! How many well-descended county families, cursed with an heir who is called a clever man of business, have vanished from the soil! A company starts—the clever man joins it—one bright day. Pouf! the old estates and the old name are powder. Ascend higher. Take nobles whose ancestral titles ought to be to English ears like the sound of clarions, awakening the most slothful to the scorn of money-bags and the passion for renown. Lo! in that mocking dance of death called the Progress of the Age, one who did not find Enough in a sovereign's revenue, and seeks The Little More as a gambler on the turf by the advice of blacklegs! Lo! another, with lands wider than his greatest ancestors ever possessed, must still go in for the Little More, adding acre to acre, heaping debt upon debt! Lo! a third, whose name, borne by his ancestors, was once the terror of England's foes—the landlord of a hotel! A fourth—but why go on through the list? Another and another still succeeds—each on the Road to Ruin, each in the Age of Progress. Ah, Miss Travers! in the old time it was through the Temple of Honour that one passed to the Temple of Fortune. In this wise age the process is reversed. But here comes your father."

"A thousand pardons!" said Leopold Travers. "That numskull Mondell kept me so long with his old-fashioned Tory doubts whether liberal politics are favourable to agricultural prospects. But as he owes a round sum to a Whig lawyer I had to talk with his wife, a prudent woman; convinced her that his own agricultural prospects were safest on the Whig

side of the question; and after kissing his baby and shaking his hand, booked his vote for George Belvoir—a plumper.”

“I suppose,” said Kenelm to himself, and with that candour which characterised him whenever he talked to himself, “that Travers has taken the right road to the Temple, not of Honour, but of honours, in every country, ancient or modern, which has adopted the system of popular suffrage.”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next day Mrs. Campion and Cecilia were seated under the verandah. They were both ostensibly employed on two several pieces of embroidery, one intended for a screen, the other for a sofa-cushion. But the mind of neither was on her work.

MRS. CAMPION.—“Has Mr. Chillingly said when he means to take leave?”

CECILIA.—“Not to me. How much my dear father enjoys his conversation!”

MRS. CAMPION.—“Cynicism and mockery were not so much the fashion among young men in your father’s day as I suppose they are now, and therefore they seem new to Mr. Travers. To me they are not new, because I saw more of the old than the young when I lived in London, and cynicism and mockery are more natural to men who are leaving the world than to those who are entering it.”

CECILIA.—“Dear Mrs. Campion, how bitter you are, and how unjust! You take much too literally the jesting way in which Mr. Chillingly expresses himself. There can be no cynicism in one who goes out of his way to make others happy.”

MRS. CAMPION.—“You mean in the whim of making an ill-assorted marriage between a pretty village flirt and a sickly cripple, and settling a couple of peasants in a business for which they are wholly unfitted.”

CECILIA.—“Jessie Wiles is not a flirt, and I am convinced that she will make Will Somers a very good wife, and that the shop will be a great success.”

MRS. CAMPION.—“We shall see. Still, if Mr. Chillingly’s talk belies his actions, he may be a good man, but he is a very affected one.”

CECILIA.—“Have I not heard you say that there are persons so natural that they seem affected to those who do not understand them?”

Mrs. Campion raised her eyes to Cecilia’s face, dropped them again over her work, and said, in grave undertones—

“Take care, Cecilia.”

“Take care of what?”

“My dearest child, forgive me; but I do not like the warmth with which you defend Mr. Chillingly.”

“Would not my father defend him still more warmly if he had heard you?”

“Men judge of men in their relations to men. I am a woman, and judge of men in their relations to women. I should tremble for the happiness of any woman who joined her fate with that of Kenelm Chillingly.”

“My dear friend, I do not understand you to-day.”

“Nay; I did not mean to be so solemn, my love. After all, it is nothing to us whom Mr. Chillingly may or may not marry. He is but a passing visitor, and, once gone, the chances are that we may not see him again for years.”

Thus speaking, Mrs. Campion again raised her eyes from her work, stealing a sidelong glance at Cecilia; and her mother-like heart sank within her, on noticing how suddenly pale the girl had become, and how her lips quivered. Mrs. Campion had enough knowledge of life to feel aware that she had committed a grievous blunder. In that earliest stage of virgin affection, when a girl is unconscious of more than a certain vague interest in one man which distinguishes him from others in her thoughts,—if she hears him unjustly disparaged, if some warning against him is implied, if the probability that he will never be more to her than a passing acquaintance is forcibly obtruded on her,—suddenly that vague interest which might otherwise have faded

away with many another girlish fancy, becomes arrested, consolidated; the quick pang it occasions makes her involuntarily, and for the first time, question herself, and ask, "Do I love?" But when a girl of a nature so delicate as that of Cecilia Travers can ask herself the question, "Do I love?" her very modesty, her very shrinking from acknowledging that any power over her thoughts for weal or for woe can be acquired by a man, except through the sanction of that love which only becomes divine in her eyes when it is earnest and pure and self-devoted, makes her prematurely disposed to answer "yes." And when a girl of such a nature in her own heart answers "yes" to such a question, even if she deceive herself at the moment, she begins to cherish the deceit till the belief in her love becomes a reality. She has adopted a religion, false or true, and she would despise herself if she could be easily converted.

Mrs. Champion had so contrived that she had forced that question upon Cecilia, and she feared, by the girl's change of countenance, that the girl's heart had answered "yes."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE the conversation just narrated took place, Kenelm had walked forth to pay a visit to Will Somers. All obstacles to Will's marriage were now cleared away; the transfer of lease for the shop had been signed, and the banns were to be published for the first time on the following Sunday. We need not say that Will was very happy. Kenelm then paid a visit to Mrs. Bowles, with whom he stayed an hour. On re-entering the Park, he saw Travers, walking slowly, with downcast eyes, and his hands clasped behind him (his habit when in thought). He did not observe Kenelm's approach till within a few feet of him, and he then greeted his guest in listless accents, unlike his usual cheerful tones.

"I have been visiting the man you have made so happy," said Kenelm,

"Who can that be?"

"Will Somers. Do you make so many people happy that your reminiscence of them is lost in their number?"

Travers smiled faintly, and shook his head.

Kenelm went on. "I have also seen Mrs. Bowles, and you will be pleased to hear that Tom is satisfied with his change of abode; there is no chance of his returning to Graveleigh; and Mrs. Bowles took very kindly to my suggestion that the little property you wish for should be sold to you, and in that case, she would remove to Luscombe to be near her son."

"I thank you much for your thought of me," said Travers, "and the affair shall be seen to at once, though the purchase is no longer important to me. I ought to have told you three days ago, but it slipped my memory, that a neighbouring squire, a young fellow just come into his property, has offered to exchange a capital farm, much nearer to my residence, for the lands I hold in Graveleigh, including Saunderson's farm and the cottages: they are quite at the outskirts of my estate, but run into his, and the exchange will be advantageous to both. Still I am glad that the neighbourhood should be thoroughly rid of a brute like Tom Bowles."

"You would not call him brute if you knew him; but I am sorry to hear that Will Somers will be under another landlord."

"It does not matter, since his tenure is secured for fourteen years."

"What sort of man is the new landlord?"

"I don't know much of him. He was in the army till his father died, and has only just made his appearance in the county. He has, however, already earned the character of being too fond of the other sex, it is well that pretty Jessie is to be safely married."

Travers then relapsed into a moody silence from which Kenelm found it difficult to rouse him. At length the latter said, kindly—

"My dear Mr. Travers, do not think I take a liberty if I venture to guess that something has happened this morning which troubles or vexes you. When that is the case, it is

often a relief to say what it is, even to a confidant so unable to advise or to comfort as myself."

"You are a good fellow, Chillingly, and I know not, at least in these parts, a man to whom I would unburthen myself more freely. I am put out, I confess; disappointed unreasonably, in a cherished wish, and," he added, with a slight laugh, "it always annoys me when I don't have my own way."

"So it does me."

"Don't you think that George Belvoir is a very fine young man?"

"Certainly."

"I call him handsome; he is steadier, too, than most men of his age, and of his command of money; and yet he does not want spirit nor knowledge of life. To every advantage of rank and fortune he adds the industry and the ambition which attain distinction in public life."

"Quite true. Is he going to withdraw from the election after all?"

"Good heavens, no!"

"Then how does he not let you have your own way?"

"It is not he," said Travers, peevishly; "it is Cecilia. Don't you understand that George is precisely the husband I would choose for her; and this morning came a very well written manly letter from him, asking my permission to pay his addresses to her."

"But that is your own way so far."

"Yes, and here comes the balk. Of course I had to refer it to Cecilia, and she positively declines, and has no reasons to give; does not deny that George is good-looking and sensible, that he is a man of whose preference any girl might be proud; but she chooses to say she cannot love him, and when I ask why she cannot love him, has no other answer than that 'she cannot say.' It is too provoking."

"It is provoking," answered Kenelm; "but then Love is the most dunderheaded of all the passions; it never will listen to reason. The very rudiments of logic are unknown to it. 'Love has no wherefore,' says one of those Latin poets who wrote love-verses called elegies—a name which we moderns appropriate to

funeral dirges. For my own part, I can't understand how any one can be expected voluntarily to make up his mind to go out of his mind. And if Miss Travers cannot go out of her mind because George Belvoir does, you could not argue her into doing so if you talked till doomsday."

Travers smiled in spite of himself, but he answered gravely,—"Certainly, I would not wish Cissy to marry any man she disliked, but she does not dislike George—no girl could; and where that is the case, a girl so sensible, so affectionate, so well brought up, is sure to love, after marriage, a thoroughly kind and estimable man, especially when she has no previous attachment—which, of course, Cissy never had. In fact, though I do not wish to force my daughter's will, I am not yet disposed to give up my own. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"I am the more inclined to a marriage so desirable in every way, because when Cissy comes out in London—which she has not yet done—she is sure to collect round her face and her presumptive inheritance all the handsome fortune-hunters and titled *vauriens*; and if in love there is no wherefore, how can I be sure that she may not fall in love with a scamp?"

"I think you may be sure of that," said Kenelm. "Miss Travers has too much mind."

"Yes, at present; but did you not say that in love people go out of their mind?"

"True! I forgot that."

"I am not then disposed to dismiss poor George's offer with a decided negative, and yet it would be unfair to mislead him by encouragement. In fact, I'll be hanged if I know how to reply."

"You think Miss Travers does not dislike George Belvoir, and if she saw more of him may like him better, and it would be good for her as well as for him not to put an end to that chance?"

"Exactly so."

"Why not then write: 'My dear George,—You have my best wishes, but my daughter does not seem disposed to marry at present. Let me consider your letter not written, and

continue on the same terms as we were before.' Perhaps, as George knows Virgil, you might find your own schoolboy recollections of that poet useful here, and add, *Varium et mutabile semper femina* ;' hackneyed, but true."

"My dear Chillingly, your suggestion is capital. How the deuce at your age have you contrived to know the world so well?"

Kenelm answered in the pathetic tones so natural to his voice, "By being only a looker-on;—alas!"

Leopold Travers felt much relieved after he had written his reply to George. He had not been quite so ingenuous in his revelation to Chillingly as he may have seemed. Conscious, like all proud and fond fathers, of his daughter's attractions, he was not without some apprehension that Kenelm himself might entertain an ambition at variance with that of George Belvoir: if so, he deemed it well to put an end to such ambition while yet in time—partly because his interest was already pledged to George; partly because, in rank and fortune, George was the better match; partly because George was of the same political party as himself—while Sir Peter, and probably Sir Peter's heir, espoused the opposite side; and partly also because, with all his personal liking to Kenelm, Leopold Travers, as a very sensible, practical man of the world, was not sure that a baronet's heir who tramped the country on foot in the dress of a petty farmer, and indulged pugilistic propensities in martial encounters with stalwart farriers, was likely to make a safe husband and a comfortable son-in-law. Kenelm's words, and still more his manner, convinced Travers that any apprehensions of rivalry that he had previously conceived, were utterly groundless.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE same evening, after dinner (during that lovely summer month they dined at Neesdale Park at an unfashionably early hour), Kenelm, in company with Travers and Cecilia, ascended a gentle eminence at the back of the gardens, on which there were some picturesque ivy-grown ruins of an ancient priory, and commanding the best view of a glorious sunset and a subject landscape of vale and wood, rivulet and distant hills.

"Is the delight in scenery," said Kenelm, "really an acquired gift, as some philosophers tell us? Is it true that young children and rude savages do not feel it—that the eye must be educated to comprehend its charm, and that the eye can be only educated through the mind?"

"I should think your philosophers are right," said Travers. "When I was a schoolboy, I thought no scenery was like the flat of a cricket ground; when I hunted at Melton, I thought that unpicturesque country more beautiful than Devonshire. It is only of late years that I feel a sensible pleasure in scenery for its own sake, apart from associations of custom or the uses to which we apply them."

"And what say you, Miss Travers?"

"I scarcely know what to say," answered Cecilia, musingly. "I can remember no time in my childhood when I did not feel delight in that which seemed to me beautiful in scenery, but I suspect that I vaguely distinguished one kind of beauty from another. A common field with daisies and buttercups was beautiful to me then, and I doubt if I saw anything more beautiful in extensive landscapes."

"True," said Kenelm: "it is not in early childhood that we carry the sight into distance: as is the mind so is the eye; in early childhood the mind revels in the present, and the eye rejoices most in the things nearest to it. I don't think in childhood that we

"'Watched with wistful eyes the setting sun,'"

"Ah! what a world of thought in that word '*wistful*'!" murmured Cecilia, as her gaze riveted itself on the western heavens, towards which Kenelm had pointed as he spoke, where the enlarging orb rested half its disc on the rim of the horizon.

She had seated herself on a fragment of the ruin, backed by the hollows of a broken arch. The last rays of the sun lingered on her young face, and then lost themselves in the gloom of the arch behind. There was a silence for some minutes, during which the sun had sunk. Rosy clouds in thin flakes still floated, momentarily waning; and the eve-star stole forth steadfast, bright, and lonely—nay, lonely not now;—that sentinel has aroused a host.

Said a voice, "No sign of rain yet, Squire. What will become of the turnips?"

"Real life again! Who can escape it?" muttered Kenelm, as his eye rested on the burly figure of the Squire's bailiff.

"Ha! North," said Travers, "what brings you here? No bad news, I hope."

"Indeed, yes, Squire. The Durham bull——"

"The Durham bull! What of him? You frighten me."

"Taken bad. Colic."

"Excuse me, Chillingly," cried Travers; "I must be off. A most valuable animal, and no one I can trust to doctor him but myself."

"That's true enough," said the bailiff, admiringly. "There's not a veterinary in the county like the Squire."

Travers was already gone, and the panting bailiff had hard work to catch him up.

Kenelm seated himself beside Cecilia on the ruined fragment.

"How I envy your father!" said he.

"Why just at this moment? Because he knows how to doctor the bull?" said Cecilia, with a sweet low laugh.

"Well, that is something to envy. It is a pleasure to relieve from pain any of God's creatures—even a Durham bull."

"Indeed yes. I am justly rebuked."

"On the contrary you are to be justly praised. Your question suggested to me an amiable sentiment in place of the

selfish one which was uppermost in my thoughts. I envied your father because he creates for himself so many objects of interest; because while he can appreciate the mere sensuous enjoyment of a landscape and a sunset, he can find mental excitement in turnip crops and bulls. Happy, Miss Travers, is the Practical Man."

"When my dear father was as young as you, Mr. Chillingly, I am sure that he had no more interest in turnips and bulls than you have. I do not doubt that some day you will be as practical as he is in that respect."

"Do you think so—sincerely?"

Cecilia made no answer.

Kenelm repeated the question.

"Sincerely, then, I do not know whether you will take interest in precisely the same things that interest my father; but there are other things than turnips and cattle which belong to what you call 'practical life,' and in these you will take interest, as you took in the fortunes of Will Somers and Jessie Wiles."

"That was no practical interest. I got nothing by it. But even if that interest were practical—I mean productive, as cattle and turnip crops are—a succession of Somerses and Wileses is not to be hoped for. History never repeats itself."

"May I answer you, though very humbly?"

"Miss Travers, the wisest man that ever existed never was wise enough to know woman; but I think most men ordinarily wise will agree in this, that woman is by no means a humble creature, and that when she says she 'answers very humbly,' she does not mean what she says. Permit me to entreat you to answer very loftily."

Cecilia laughed and blushed. The laugh was musical; the blush was—what? Let any man, seated beside a girl like Cecilia at starry twilight, find the right epithet for that blush. I pass it by epithetless. But she answered, firmly though sweetly—

"Are there not things very practical, and affecting the happiness, not of one or two individuals, but of innumerable thousands, in which a man like Mr. Chillingly cannot fail to feel interest, long before he is my father's age?"

"Forgive me; you do not answer—you question. I imitate you, and ask what are those things as applicable to a man like Mr. Chillingly?"

Cecilia gathered herself up, as with the desire to express a great deal in short substance, and then said—

"In the expression of thought, literature; in the conduct of action, politics."

Kenelm Chillingly stared, dumbfounded. I suppose the greatest enthusiast for woman's rights could not assert more reverentially than he did the cleverness of women; but among the things which the cleverness of woman did not achieve, he had always placed "laconics." "No woman," he was wont to say, "ever invented an axiom or a proverb."

"Miss Travers," he said at last, "before we proceed farther, vouchsafe to tell me if that very terse reply of yours is spontaneous and original; or whether you have not borrowed it from some book which I have not chanced to read?"

Cecilia pondered honestly, and then said, "I don't think it is from any book; but I owe so many of my thoughts to Mrs. Campion, and she lived so much among clever men, that——"

"I see it all, and accept your definition, no matter whence it came. You think I might become an author or a politician. Did you ever read an essay by a living author called *Motive Power*?"

"No."

"That essay is designed to intimate that without motive power a man, whatever his talents or his culture, does nothing practical. The mainsprings of motive power are Want and Ambition. They are absent from my mechanism. By the accident of birth I do not require bread and cheese; by the accident of temperament and of philosophical culture I care nothing about praise or blame. But without want of bread and cheese, and with a most stolid indifference to praise and blame, do you honestly think that a man will do anything practical in literature or politics? Ask Mrs. Campion."

"I will not ask her. Is the sense of duty nothing?"

"Alas! we interpret duty so variously. Of mere duty, as we commonly understand the word, I do not think I shall fail more

than other men. But for the fair development of all the good that is in us, do you believe that we should adopt some line of conduct against which our whole heart rebels? Can you say to the clerk, 'Be a poet'? Can you say to the poet, 'Be a clerk'? It is no more to the happiness of a man's being to order him to take to one career when his whole heart is set on another, than it is to order him to marry one woman when it is to another woman that his heart will turn."

Cecilia here winced and looked away. Kenelm had more tact than most men of his age—that is, a keener perception of subjects to avoid; but then Kenelm had a wretched habit of forgetting the person he talked to and talking to himself. Utterly oblivious of George Belvoir, he was talking to himself now. Not then observing the effect his *mal-à-propos* dogma had produced on his listener, he went on—"Happiness is a word very lightly used. It may mean little—it may mean much. By the word happiness I would signify, not the momentary joy of a child who gets a plaything, but the lasting harmony between our inclinations and our objects; and without that harmony we are a discord to ourselves, we are incompleteness, we are failures. Yet there are plenty of advisers who say to us, 'It is a duty to be a discord.' I deny it."

Here Cecilia rose and said in a low voice, "It is getting late. We must go homeward."

They descended the green eminence slowly, and at first in silence. The bats, emerging from the ivied ruins they left behind, flitted and skimmed before them, chasing the insects of the night. A moth, escaping from its pursuer, alighted on Cecilia's breast, as if for refuge.

"The bats are practical," said Kenelm; "they are hungry, and their motive power to-night is strong. Their interest is in the insects they chase. They have no interest in the stars; but the stars lure the moth."

Cecilia drew her slight scarf over the moth, so that it might not fly off and become a prey to the bats. "Yet," said she, "the moth is practical too."

"Ay, just now, since it has found an asylum from the danger that threatened it in its course towards the stars."

Cecilia felt the beating of her heart, upon which lay the moth concealed. Did she think that a deeper and more tender meaning than they outwardly expressed was couched in these words? If so, she erred. They now neared the garden gate, and Kenelm paused as he opened it. "See," he said, "the moon has just risen over those dark firs, making the still night stiller. Is it not strange that we mortals, placed amid perpetual agitation and tumult and strife, as if our natural element, conceive a sense of holiness in the images antagonistic to our real life—I mean in images of repose? I feel at the moment as if I suddenly were made better, now that heaven and earth have suddenly become yet more tranquil. I am now conscious of a purer and sweeter moral than either I or you drew from the insect you have sheltered. I must come to the poets to express it—

" 'The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow ;
*The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow.*'

Oh, that something afar! that something afar! never to be reached on this earth—never, never!"

There was such a wail in that cry from the man's heart that Cecilia could not resist the impulse of a divine compassion. She laid her hand on his, and looked on the dark mildness of his upward face with eyes that Heaven meant to be wells of comfort to grieving man. At the light touch of that hand Kenelm started, looked down, and met those soothing eyes.

"I am happy to tell you that I have saved my Durham," cried out Mr. Travers from the other side of the gate.

CHAPTER XX.

AS Kenelm that night retired to his own room, he paused on the landing-place opposite to the portrait which Mr. Travers had consigned to that desolate exile. This daughter of a race dishonoured in its extinction might well have been the glory of the house she had entered as a bride. The countenance was

singularly beautiful, and of a character of beauty eminently patrician; there was in its expression a gentleness and modesty not often found in the female portraits of Sir Peter Lely; and in the eyes and in the smile a wonderful aspect of innocent happiness.

"What a speaking homily," soliloquised Kenelm, addressing the picture, "against the ambition thy fair descendant would awake in me, art thou, O lovely image! For generations thy beauty lived in this canvas, a thing of joy, the pride of the race it adorned. Owner after owner said to admiring guests, 'Yes, a fine portrait, by Lely; she was my ancestress—a Fletwode of Fletwode.' Now, lest guests should remember that a Fletwode married a Travers thou art thrust out of sight; not even Lely's art can make thee of value, can redeem thine innocent self from disgrace. And the last of the Fletwodes, doubtless the most ambitious of all—the most bent on restoring and regilding the old lordly name—dies a felon; the infamy of one living man so large that it can blot out the honour of the dead." He turned his eyes from the smile of the portrait, entered his own room, and seating himself by the writing table, drew blotting-book and note-paper towards him, took up the pen, and instead of writing fell into deep reverie. There was a slight frown on his brow, on which frowns were rare. He was very angry with himself.

"Kenelm," he said, entering into his customary dialogue with that self, "it becomes you, forsooth, to moralise about the honour of races which have no affinity with you. Son of Sir Peter Chillingly, look at home. Are you quite sure that you have not said or done or looked a something that may bring trouble to the hearth on which you are received as guest? What right had you to be moaning forth your egotisms, not remembering that your words fell on compassionate ears, and that such words, heard at moonlight by a girl whose heart they move to pity, may have dangers for her peace? Shame on you, Kenelm! shame! knowing too what her father's wish is; and knowing too that you have not the excuse of desiring to win that fair creature for yourself. What do you mean, Kenelm? I don't hear you; speak out. Oh, 'that I am a

vain coxcomb to fancy that she could take a fancy to me'—well, perhaps I am; I hope so earnestly; and at all events, there has been and shall be no time for much mischief. We are off to-morrow, Kenelm; bestir yourself and pack up, write your letters, and then 'put out the light—put out *the* light!'"

But this converser with himself did not immediately set to work, as agreed upon by that twofold one. He rose and walked restlessly to and fro the floor, stopping ever and anon to look at the pictures on the walls.

Several of the worst painted of the family portraits had been consigned to the room tenanted by Kenelm, which, though both the oldest and largest bedchamber in the house, was always appropriated to a bachelor male guest, partly because it was without dressing-room, remote, and only approached by the small back staircase, to the landing-place of which Arabella had been banished in disgrace; and partly because it had the reputation of being haunted, and ladies are more alarmed by that superstition than men are supposed to be. The portraits on which Kenelm now paused to gaze were of various dates, from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George III., none of them by eminent artists, and none of them the effigies of ancestors who had left names in history—in short, such portraits as are often seen in the country houses of well-born squires. One family type of feature or expression pervaded most of these portraits—features clear-cut and hardy, expression open and honest. And though not one of those dead men had been famous, each of them had contributed his unostentatious share, in his own simple way, to the movements of his time. That worthy in ruff and corselet had manned his own ship at his own cost against the Armada; never had been repaid by the thrifty Burleigh the expenses which had harassed him and diminished his patrimony; never had been even knighted. That gentleman with short straight hair, which overhung his forehead, leaning on his sword with one hand, and a book open in the other hand, had served as representative of his county town in the Long Parliament, fought under Cromwell at Marston Moor, and resisting the Protector when he removed the 'bauble,' was one of the patriots

incarcerated in "Hell hole." He, too, had diminished his patrimony, maintaining two troopers and two horses at his own charge, and "Hell hole" was all he got in return. A third, with a sleeker expression of countenance, and a large wig, flourishing in the quiet times of Charles II., had only been a justice of the peace, but his alert look showed that he had been a very active one. He had neither increased nor diminished his ancestral fortune. A fourth, in the costume of William III.'s reign, had somewhat added to the patrimony by becoming a lawyer. He must have been a successful one. He is inscribed "Serjeant-at-law." A fifth, a lieutenant in the army, was killed at Blenheim; his portrait was that of a very young and handsome man, taken the year before his death. His wife's portrait is placed in the drawing-room because it was painted by Kneller. She was handsome too, and married again a nobleman, whose portrait, of course, was not in the family collection. Here there was a gap in chronological arrangement, the lieutenant's heir being an infant; but in the time of George II. another Travers appeared as the governor of a West India colony. His son took part in a very different movement of the age. He is represented old, venerable, with white hair, and underneath his effigy is inscribed, "Follower of Wesley." His successor completes the collection. He is in naval uniform; he is in full length, and one of his legs is a wooden one. He is Captain R.N., and inscribed, "Fought under Nelson at Trafalgar." That portrait would have found more dignified place in the reception-rooms if the face had not been forbiddingly ugly, and the picture itself a villainous daub.

"I see," said Kenelm, stopping short, "why Cecilia Travers has been reared to talk of duty as a practical interest in life. These men of a former time seem to have lived to discharge a duty, and not to follow the progress of the age in the chase of a money-bag—except perhaps one, but then to be sure he was a lawyer. Kenelm, rouse up and listen to me; whatever we are, whether active or indolent, is not my favourite maxim a just and a true one—viz., 'A good man does good by living'? But, for that, he must be a harmony and not a discord. Kenelm, you lazy dog, we must pack up."

Kenelm then refilled his portmanteau, and labelled and directed it to Exmundham, after which he wrote these three notes :—

Note 1.

TO THE MARCHIONESS OF GLENALVON.

“MY DEAR FRIEND AND MONITRESS,—“I have left your last letter a month unanswered. I could not reply to your congratulations on the event of my attaining the age of twenty-one. That event is a conventional sham, and you know how I abhor shams and conventions. The truth is, that I am either much younger than twenty-one or much older. As to all designs on my peace in standing for our county at the next election, I wished to defeat them, and I have done so ; and now I have commenced a course of travel. I had intended on starting to confine it to my native country. Intentions are mutable. I am going abroad. You shall hear of my whereabouts. I write this from the house of Leopold Travers, who, I understand from his fair daughter is a connection of yours ;—a man to be highly esteemed and cordially liked.

“No, in spite of all your flattering predictions, I shall never be anything in this life more distinguished than what I am now. Lady Glenalvon allows me to sign myself her grateful friend,

“K. C.”

Note 2.

“DEAR COUSIN MIVERS—“I am going abroad. I may want money ; for, in order to rouse motive power within me, I mean to want money if I can. When I was a boy of sixteen you offered me money to write attacks upon veteran authors for *The Londoner*. Will you give me money now for a similar display of that grand New Idea of our generation—viz., that the less a man knows of a subject the better he understands it? I am about to travel into countries which I have never seen, and among races I have never known. My arbitrary judgments on both will be invaluable to *The Londoner* from a Special Correspondent who shares your respect for the anonymous, and whose name is never to be divulged. Direct

your answer by return to me, *poste restante*, Calais.—Yours truly,
K. C.”

Note 3.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—I found your letter here, whence I depart to-morrow. Excuse haste. I go abroad, and shall write to you from Calais.

“I admire Leopold Travers very much. After all, how much of self-balance there is in a true English gentleman! Toss him up and down where you will, and he always alights on his feet—a gentleman. He has one child, a daughter named Cecilia—handsome enough to allure into wedlock any mortal whom Decimus Roach had not convinced that in celibacy lay the right ‘Approach to the Angels.’ Moreover, she is a girl whom one can talk with. Even you could talk with her. Travers wishes her to marry a very respectable, good-looking, promising gentleman, in every way ‘suitable,’ as they say. And if she does, she will rival that pink and perfection of polished womanhood, Lady Glenalvon. I send you back my portmanteau. I have pretty well exhausted my experience-money, but have not yet encroached on my monthly allowance. I mean still to live upon that, eking it out, if necessary, by the sweat of my brow or brains. But if any case requiring extra funds should occur—a case in which that extra would do such real good to another that I feel *you* would do it—why, I must draw a cheque on your bankers. But understand that is your expense, not mine, and it is *you* who are to be repaid in Heaven. Dear father, how I do love and honour you every day more and more! Promise you not to propose to any young lady till I come first to you for consent!—oh, my dear father, how could you doubt it? how doubt that I could not be happy with any wife whom you could not love as a daughter? Accept that promise as sacred. But I wish you had asked me something in which obedience was not much too facile to be a test of duty. I could not have obeyed you more cheerfully if you had asked me to promise never to propose to any young lady at all. Had you asked me to promise that I would renounce the dignity of reason for the frenzy of love, or the freedom of man for the servitude of

husband, then I might have sought to achieve the impossible ; but I should have died in the effort !—and thou wouldst have known that remorse which haunts the bed of the tyrant.—
Your affectionate son,
K. C."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE next morning Kenelm surprised the party at breakfast by appearing in the coarse habiliments in which he had first made his host's acquaintance. He did not glance towards Cecilia when he announced his departure : but, his eye resting on Mrs. Campion, he smiled, perhaps a little sadly, at seeing her countenance brighten up and hearing her give a short sigh of relief. Travers tried hard to induce him to stay a few days longer, but Kenelm was firm. "The summer is wearing away," said he, "and I have far to go before the flowers fade and the snows fall. On the third night from this I shall sleep on foreign soil."

"You are going abroad, then ?" asked Mrs. Campion.

"Yes."

"A sudden resolution Mr. Chillingly. The other day you talked of visiting the Scotch lakes."

"True ; but on reflection, they will be crowded with holiday tourists, many of whom I shall probably know. Abroad I shall be free, for I shall be unknown."

"I suppose you will be back for the hunting season," said Travers.

"I think not. I do not hunt foxes."

"Probably we shall at all events meet in London," said Travers. "I think, after long rustication, that a season or two in the bustling capital may be a salutary change for mind as well as for body ; and it is time that Cecilia were presented and her court-dress specially commemorated in the columns of the *Morning Post*."

Cecilia was seemingly too busied behind the tea-urn to heed this reference to her *début*.

"I shall miss you terribly," cried Travers, a few moments afterwards, and with a hearty emphasis. "I declare that you have quite unsettled me. Your quaint sayings will be ringing in my ears long after you are gone."

There was a rustle as of a woman's dress in sudden change of movement behind the tea-urn.

"Cissy," said Mrs. Campion, "are we ever to have our tea?"

"I beg pardon," answered a voice behind the urn. "I hear Pompey" (the Skye terrier) "whining on the lawn. They have shut him out. I will be back presently."

Cecilia rose and was gone. Mrs. Campion took her place at the tea-urn.

"It is quite absurd of Cissy to be so fond of that hideous dog," said Travers, petulantly.

"Its hideousness is its beauty," returned Mrs. Campion, laughing. "Mr. Belvoir selected it for her as having the longest back and the shortest legs of any dog he could find in Scotland."

"Ah, George gave it to her; I forgot that," said Travers, laughing pleasantly.

It was some minutes before Miss Travers returned with the Skye terrier, and she seemed to have recovered her spirits in regaining that ornamental accession to the party—talking very quickly and gaily, and with flushed cheeks, like a young person excited by her own overflow of mirth.

But when, half an hour afterwards, Kenelm took leave of her and Mrs. Campion at the hall-door, the flush was gone, her lips were tightly compressed, and her parting words were not audible. Then, as his figure (side by side with her father, who accompanied his guest to the lodge) swiftly passed across the lawn and vanished amid the trees beyond, Mrs. Campion wound a mother-like arm around her waist and kissed her. Cecilia shivered and turned her face to her friend smiling; but such a smile,—one of those smiles that seem brimful of tears.

"Thank you, dear," she said, meekly; and gliding away towards the flower-garden, lingered a while by the gate which Kenelm had opened the night before. Then she went with languid steps up the green slopes towards the ruined priory.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

IT is somewhat more than a year and a half since Kenelm Chillingly left England, and the scene now is in London, during that earlier and more sociable season which precedes the Easter holidays—season in which the charm of intellectual companionship is not yet withered away in the heated atmosphere of crowded rooms—season in which parties are small, and conversation extends beyond the interchange of commonplace with one's next neighbour at a dinner-table—season in which you have a fair chance of finding your warmest friends not absorbed by the superior claims of their chilliest acquaintances.

There was what is called a *conversazione* at the house of one of those Whig noblemen who yet retain the graceful art of bringing agreeable people together, and collecting round them the true aristocracy, which combines letters and art and science with hereditary rank and political distinction—that art which was the happy secret of the Lansdownes and Hollands of the last generation. Lord Beaumanoir was himself a genial, well-read man, a good judge of art, and a pleasant talker. He had a charming wife, devoted to him and to her children, but with enough love of general approbation to make herself as popular in the fashionable world as if she sought in its gaieties a refuge from the dulness of domestic life.

Amongst the guests at the Beaumanoirs this evening were

two men, seated apart in a small room, and conversing familiarly. The one might be about fifty-four; he was tall, strongly built, but not corpulent, somewhat bald, with black eyebrows, dark eyes, bright and keen, mobile lips round which there played a shrewd and sometimes sarcastic smile.

This gentleman, the Right Hon. Gerard Danvers, was a very influential member of Parliament. He had, when young for English public life, attained to high office; but—partly from a great distaste to the drudgery of administration; partly from a pride of temperament, which unfitted him for the subordination that a Cabinet owes to its chief; partly, also, from a not uncommon kind of epicurean philosophy, at once joyous and cynical, which sought the pleasures of life and held very cheap its honours—he had obstinately declined to re-enter office, and only spoke on rare occasions. On such occasions he carried great weight, and, by the brief expression of his opinions, commanded more votes than many an orator infinitely more eloquent. Despite his want of ambition, he was fond of power in his own way—power over the people who *had* power; and, in the love of political intrigue, he found an amusement for an intellect very subtle and very active. At this moment he was bent on a new combination among the leaders of different sections in the same party by which certain veterans were to retire, and certain younger men to be admitted into the Administration. It was an amiable feature in his character that he had a sympathy with the young, and had helped to bring into Parliament, as well as into office, some of the ablest of a generation later than his own. He gave them sensible counsel, was pleased when they succeeded, and encouraged them when they failed—always provided that they had stuff enough in them to redeem the failure; if not, he gently dropped them from his intimacy, but maintained sufficiently familiar terms with them to be pretty sure that he could influence their votes whenever he so desired.

The gentleman with whom he was now conversing was young, about five-and-twenty—not yet in Parliament, but with an intense desire to obtain a seat in it, and with one of those reputations which a youth carries away from school and

college, justified, not by honours purely academical, but by an impression of ability and power created on the minds of his contemporaries, and endorsed by his elders. He had done little at the university beyond taking a fair degree—except acquiring at the debating society the fame of an exceedingly ready and adroit speaker. On quitting college he had written one or two political articles in a quarterly review which created a sensation; and though belonging to no profession, and having but a small yet independent income, society was very civil to him, as to a man who would some day or other attain a position in which he could damage his enemies and serve his friends. Something in this young man's countenance and bearing tended to favour the credit given to his ability and his promise. In his countenance there was no beauty; in his bearing no elegance. But in that countenance there was vigour—there was energy—there was audacity. A forehead wide but low, protuberant in those organs over the brow which indicate the qualities fitted for perception and judgment—qualities for everyday life; eyes of the clear English blue, small, somewhat sunken, vigilant, sagacious, penetrating; a long straight upper lip, significant of resolute purpose; a mouth in which a student of physiognomy would have detected a dangerous charm. The smile was captivating, but it was artificial, surrounded by dimples, and displaying teeth white, small, strong, but divided from each other. The expression of that smile would have been frank and candid to all who failed to notice that it was not in harmony with the brooding forehead and the steely eye—that it seemed to stand distinct from the rest of the face, like a feature that had learned its part. There was that physical power in the back of the head which belongs to men who make their way in life—combative and destructive. All gladiators have it; so have great debaters and great reformers—that is, reformers who can destroy, but not necessarily reconstruct. So, too, in the bearing of the man there was a hardy self-confidence, much too simple and unaffected for his worst enemy to call it self-conceit. It was the bearing of one who knew how to maintain personal dignity without seeming to care about it. Never servile to the great, never arrogant to the little;

so little over-refined that it was never vulgar,—a popular bearing.

The room in which these gentlemen were seated was separated from the general suite of apartments by a lobby off the landing-place, and served for Lady Beaumanoir's boudoir. Very pretty it was, but simply furnished, with chintz draperies. The walls were adorned with drawings in water-colours, and precious specimens of china on fanciful Parian brackets. At one corner, by a window that looked southward and opened on a spacious balcony, glazed in and filled with flowers, stood one of those high trellised screens, first invented, I believe, in Vienna, and along which ivy is so trained as to form an arbour.

The recess thus constructed, and which was completely out of sight from the rest of the room, was the hostess's favourite writing nook. The two men I have described were seated near the screen, and had certainly no suspicion that any one could be behind it.

"Yes," said Mr. Danvers, from an ottoman niched in another recess of the room, "I think there will be an opening at Saxboro' soon; Milroy wants a Colonial Government; and if we can reconstruct the Cabinet as I propose, he would get one. Saxboro' would thus be vacant. But, my dear fellow, Saxboro' is a place to be wooed through love, and only won through money. It demands liberalism from a candidate—two kinds of liberalism seldom united; the liberalism in opinion which is natural enough to a very poor man, and the liberalism in expenditure which is scarcely to be obtained except from a very rich one. You may compute the cost of Saxboro' at 3000*l.* to get in, and about 2000*l.* more to defend your seat against a petition—the defeated candidate nearly always petitions. 5000*l.* is a large sum; and the worst of it is, that the extreme opinions to which the member for Saxboro' must pledge himself are a drawback to an official career. Violent politicians are not the best raw material out of which to manufacture fortunate placemen."

"The opinions do not so much matter; the expense **does**. I cannot afford 5000*l.*, or even 3000*l.*"

"Would not Sir Peter assist? He has, you say, only one son; and if anything happen to that son, you are the next heir."

"My father quarrelled with Sir Peter, and harassed him by an imprudent and ungracious litigation. I scarcely think I could apply to him for money to obtain a seat in Parliament upon the democratic side of the question; for though I know little of his politics, I take it for granted that a country gentleman of old family and 10,000*l.* a-year cannot well be a democrat."

"Then I presume you would not be a democrat if, by the death of your cousin, you became heir to the Chillinglys."

"I am not sure what I might be in that case. There are times when a democrat of ancient lineage and good estates could take a very high place amongst the aristocracy."

"Humph! my dear Gordon, *vous irez loin.*"

"I hope to do so. Measuring myself against the men of my own day, I do not see many who should outstrip me."

"What sort of a fellow is your cousin Kenelm? I met him once or twice when he was very young, and reading with Welby in London. People then said that he was very clever; he struck me as very odd."

"I never saw him; but from all I hear, whether he be clever or whether he be odd, he is not likely to do anything in life—a dreamer."

"Writes poetry perhaps?"

"Capable of it, I dare say."

Just then some other guests came into the room, amongst them a lady of an appearance at once singularly distinguished and singularly prepossessing, rather above the common height, and with a certain indescribable nobility of air and presence. Lady Glenalvon was one of the queens of the London world, and no queen of that world was ever less worldly or more queen-like. Side by side with the lady was Mr. Chillingly Mivers. Gordon and Mivers interchanged friendly nods, and the former sauntered away and was soon lost amid a crowd of other young men, with whom, as he could converse well and lightly on things which interested them, he was rather a favourite, though he was not an intimate associate. Mr.

Danvers retired into a corner of the adjoining lobby, where he favoured the French ambassador with his views on the state of Europe and the reconstruction of Cabinets in general.

"But," said Lady Glenalvon to Chillingly Mivers, "are you quite sure that my old young friend Kenelm is here? Since you told me so, I have looked everywhere for him in vain. I should so much like to see him again."

"I certainly caught a glimpse of him half an hour ago; but before I could escape from a geologist who was boring me about the Silurian system, Kenelm had vanished."

"Perhaps it was his ghost!"

"Well, we certainly live in the most credulous and superstitious age upon record; and so many people tell me that they converse with the dead under the table, that it seems impertinent in me to say that I don't believe in ghosts."

"Tell me some of those incomprehensible stories about table-rapping," said Lady Glenalvon. "There is a charming snug recess here behind the screen."

Scarcely had she entered the recess than she drew back with a start and an exclamation of amaze. Seated at the table within the recess, his chin resting on his hand, and his face cast down in abstracted reverie, was a young man. So still was his attitude, so calmly mournful the expression of his face, so estranged did he seem from all the motley but brilliant assemblage which circled around the solitude he had made for himself, that he might well have been deemed one of those visitants from another world whose secrets the intruder had wished to learn. Of that intruder's presence he was evidently unconscious. Recovering her surprise, she stole up to him placed her hand on his shoulder, and uttered his name in a low gentle voice. At that sound Kenelm Chillingly looked up.

"Do you not remember me?" asked Lady Glenalvon. Before he could answer, Mivers, who had followed the Marchioness into the recess, interposed.

"My dear Kenelm, how are you? When did you come to London? Why have you not called on me; and what on earth are you hiding yourself for?"

Kenelm had now recovered the self-possession which he rarely

lost long in the presence of others. He returned cordially his kinsman's greeting, and kissed with his wonted chivalrous grace the fair hand which the lady withdrew from his shoulder and extended to his pressure. "Remember you!" he said to Lady Glenalvon with the kindest expression of his soft dark eyes; "I am not so far advanced towards the noon of life as to forget the sunshine that brightened its morning. My dear Mivers, your questions are easily answered. I arrived in England two weeks ago, stayed at Exmundham till this morning, to-day dined with Lord Thetford, whose acquaintance I made abroad, and was persuaded by him to come here and be introduced to his father and mother, the Beaumanoirs. After I had undergone that ceremony, the sight of so many strange faces frightened me into shyness. Entering this room at a moment when it was quite deserted, I resolved to turn hermit behind the screen."

"Why, you must have seen your cousin Gordon as you came into the room."

"But you forget I don't know him by sight. However, there was no one in the room when I entered; a little later some others came in, for I heard a faint buzz, like that of persons talking in a whisper. However, I was no eavesdropper, as a person behind a screen is on the dramatic stage."

This was true. Even had Gordon and Danvers talked in a louder tone, Kenelm had been too absorbed in his own thoughts to have heard a word of their conversation.

"You ought to know young Gordon; he is a very clever fellow, and has an ambition to enter Parliament. I hope no old family quarrel between his bear of a father and dear Sir Peter will make you object to meet him."

"Sir Peter is the most forgiving of men, but he would scarcely forgive me if I declined to meet a cousin who had never offended him."

"Well said. Come and meet Gordon at breakfast to-morrow—ten o'clock. I am still in the old rooms."

While the kinsmen thus conversed, Lady Glenalvon had seated herself on the couch beside Kenelm, and was quietly observing his countenance. Now she spoke. "My dear Mr. Mivers, you will have many opportunities of talking with

Kenelm; do not grudge me five minutes' talk with him now."

"I leave your ladyship alone in your hermitage. How all the men in this assembly will envy the hermit!"

CHAPTER II.

"I AM glad to see you once more in the world," said Lady Glenalvon; "and I trust that you are now prepared to take that part in it which ought to be no mean one if you do justice to your talents and your nature."

KENELM.—"When you go to the theatre, and see one of the pieces which appear now to be the fashion, which would you rather be—an actor or a looker-on?"

LADY GLENALVON.—"My dear young friend, your question saddens me." (After a pause.)—"But though I used a stage metaphor when I expressed my hope that you would take no mean part in the world, the world is not really a theatre. Life admits of no lookers-on. Speak to me frankly, as you used to do. Your face retains its old melancholy expression. Are you not happy?"

KENELM.—"Happy, as mortals go, I ought to be. I do not think I am unhappy. If my temper be melancholic, melancholy has a happiness of its own. Milton shows that there are as many charms in life to be found on the *Penseroso* side of it as there are on the *Allegro*."

LADY GLENALVON.—"Kenelm, you saved the life of my poor son, and when, later, he was taken from me, I felt as if he had commended you to my care. When at the age of sixteen with a boy's years and a man's heart, you came to London, did I not try to be to you almost as a mother? and did you not often tell me that you could confide to me the secrets of your heart more readily than to any other?"

"You were to me," said Kenelm, with emotion, "that most precious and sustaining good genius which a youth can find at the threshold of life—a woman gently wise, kindly sympathising,

shaming him by the spectacle of her own purity from all grosser errors, elevating him from mean tastes and objects by the exquisite, ineffable loftiness of soul which is only found in the noblest order of womanhood. Come, I will open my heart to you still. I fear it is more wayward than ever. It still feels estranged from the companionship and pursuits natural to my age and station. However, I have been seeking to brace and harden my nature, for the practical ends of life, by travel and adventure, chiefly among rougher varieties of mankind than we meet in drawing-rooms. Now, in compliance with the duty I owe to my dear father's wishes, I come back to these circles, which under your auspices I entered in boyhood, and which even then seemed to me so inane and artificial. Take a part in the world of these circles; such is your wish. My answer is brief. I have been doing my best to acquire a motive power, and have not succeeded. I see nothing that I care to strive for, nothing that I care to gain. The very times in which we live are to me as to Hamlet—out of joint; and I am not born like Hamlet to set them right. Ah! if I could look on society through the spectacles with which the poor hidalgo in *Gil Blas* looked on his meagre board—spectacles by which cherries appear the size of peaches, and tomtits as large as turkeys! The imagination which is necessary to ambition is a great magnifier."

"I have known more than one man, now very eminent, very active, who at your age felt the same estrangement from the practical pursuits of others."

"And what reconciled those men to such pursuits?"

"That diminished sense of individual personality, that unconscious fusion of one's own being into other existences, which belong to home and marriage."

"I don't object to home, but I do to marriage."

"Depend on it there is no home for man where there is no woman."

"Prettily said. In that case I resign the home."

"Do you mean seriously to tell me that you never see the woman you could love enough to make her your wife, and never enter any home that you do not quit with a touch of envy at the happiness of married life?"

"Seriously, I never see such a woman; seriously, I never enter such a home."

"Patience, then; your time will come, and I hope it is at hand. Listen to me. It was only yesterday that I felt an indescribable longing to see you again—to know your address that I might write to you; for yesterday, when a certain young lady left my house, after a week's visit, I said, this girl would make a perfect wife, and, above all, the exact wife to suit Kenelm Chillingly."

"Kenelm Chillingly is very glad to hear that this young lady has left your house."

"But she has not left London—she is here to-night. She only stayed with me till her father came to town, and the house he had taken for the season was vacant; those events happened yesterday."

"Fortunate events for me: they permit me to call on you without danger."

"Have you no curiosity to know, at least, who and what is the young lady who appears to me so well suited to you?"

"No curiosity, but a vague sensation of alarm."

"Well, I cannot talk pleasantly with you while you are in this irritating mood, and it is time to quit the hermitage. Come, there are many persons here with some of whom you should renew old acquaintance, and to some of whom I should like to make you known."

"I am prepared to follow Lady Glenalvon wherever she deigns to lead me—except to the altar with another."

CHAPTER III.

THE rooms were now full—not overcrowded, but full—and it was rarely even in that house that so many distinguished persons were collected together. A young man thus honoured by so *grande* a *dame* as Lady Glenalvon, could not but be cordially welcomed by all to whom she presented him, Ministers

and Parliamentary leaders, ball-givers, and beauties in vogue—even authors and artists; and there was something in Kenelm Chillingly, in his striking countenance and figure, in that calm ease of manner natural to his indifference to effect, which seemed to justify the favour shown to him by the brilliant princess of fashion, and mark him out for general observation.

That first evening of his reintroduction to the polite world was a success which few young men of his years achieve. He produced a sensation. Just as the rooms were thinning, Lady Glenalvon whispered to Kenelm—

“Come this way—there is one person I must reintroduce you to—thank me for it hereafter.”

Kenelm followed the Marchioness, and found himself face to face with Cecilia Travers. She was leaning on her father’s arm, looking very handsome, and her beauty was heightened by the blush which overspread her cheeks as Kenelm Chillingly approached.

Travers greeted him with great cordiality; and Lady Glenalvon asking him to escort her to the refreshment-room, Kenelm had no option but to offer his arm to Cecilia.

Kenelm felt somewhat embarrassed. “Have you been long in town, Miss Travers?”

“A little more than a week, but we only settled into our house yesterday.”

“Ah, indeed! were you then the young lady who——” He stopped short, and his face grew gentler and graver in its expression.

“The young lady who—what?” asked Cecilia with a smile.

“Who has been staying with Lady Glenalvon?”

“Yes; did she tell you?”

“She did not mention your name, but praised that young lady so justly that I ought to have guessed it.”

Cecilia made some not very audible answer, and on entering the refreshment-room other young men gathered round her, and Lady Glenalvon and Kenelm remained silent in the midst of a general small-talk. When Travers, after giving his address to Kenelm, and, of course, pressing him to call, left the house with Cecilia, Kenelm said to Lady Glenalvon, musingly, “So

that is the young lady in whom I was to see my fate: you knew that we had met before?"

"Yes, she told me when and where. Besides, it is not two years since you wrote to me from her father's house. Do you forget?"

"Ah," said, Kenelm, so abstractedly that he seemed to be dreaming, "no man with his eyes open rushes on his fate; when he does so his sight is gone. Love is blind. They say the blind are very happy, yet I never met a blind man who would not recover his sight if he could."

CHAPTER IV.

MR. CHILLINGLY MIVERS never gave a dinner at his own rooms. When he did give a dinner it was at Greenwich or Richmond. But he gave breakfast-parties pretty often, and they were considered pleasant. He had handsome bachelor apartments in Grosvenor Street, daintily furnished, with a prevalent air of exquisite neatness. A good library stored with books of reference, and adorned with presentation copies from authors of the day, very beautifully bound. Though the room served for the study of the professed man of letters, it had none of the untidy litter which generally characterises the study of one whose vocation it is to deal with books and papers. Even the implements for writing were not apparent, except when required. They lay concealed in a vast cylinder bureau, French made, and French polished. Within that bureau were numerous pigeon-holes and secret drawers, and a profound well with a separate patent lock. In the well were deposited the articles intended for publication in *The Londoner* — proof-sheets, &c.; pigeon-holes were devoted to ordinary correspondence; secret drawers to confidential notes, and outlines of biographies of eminent men now living, but intended to be completed for publication the day after their death.

No man wrote such funeral compositions with a livelier pen than that of Chillingly Mivers; and the large and miscellaneous circle of his visiting acquaintances allowed him to ascertain, whether by authoritative report or by personal observation, the signs of mortal disease in the illustrious friends whose dinners he accepted, and whose failing pulses he instinctively felt in returning the pressure of their hands; so that he was often able to put the finishing-stroke to their obituary memorials, days, weeks, even months, before their fate took the public by surprise. That cylinder bureau was in harmony with the secrecy in which this remarkable man shrouded the productions of his brain. In his literary life Mivers had no "I;" there he was ever the inscrutable, mysterious "We." He was only "I" when you met him in the world, and called him Mivers.

Adjoining the library on one side was a small dining or rather breakfast-room, hung with valuable pictures—presents from living painters. Many of these painters had been severely handled by Mr. Mivers in his existence as "We,"—not always in *The Londoner*. His most pungent criticisms were often contributed to other intellectual journals conducted by members of the same intellectual clique. Painters knew not how contemptuously "We" had treated them when they met Mr. Mivers. His "I" was so complimentary that they sent him a tribute of their gratitude.

On the other side was his drawing-room, also enriched by many gifts, chiefly from fair hands—embroidered cushions and table-covers, bits of Sèvres or old Chelsea, elegant knickknacks of all kinds. Fashionable authoresses paid great court to Mr. Mivers; and in the course of his life as a single man, he had other female adorers besides fashionable authoresses.

Mr. Mivers had already returned from his early constitutional walk in the Park, and was now seated by the cylinder *secrétaire* with a mild-looking man, who was one of the most merciless contributors to *The Londoner* and no unimportant councillor in the oligarchy of the clique that went by the name of the "Intellectuals."

"Well," said Mivers, languidly, "I can't even get through the book; it is as dull as the country in November. But, as you

justly say, the writer is an "Intellectual," and a clique would be anything but intellectual if it did not support its members. Review the book yourself—mind and make the dulness of it the signal proof of its merit. Say—"To the ordinary class of readers this exquisite work may appear less brilliant than the flippant smartness of"—any other author you like to name; 'but to the well educated and intelligent every line is pregnant with,' &c., &c. By the way, when we come by and by to review the exhibition at Burlington House, there is one painter whom we must try our best to crush. I have not seen his pictures myself, but he is a new man, and our friend, who has seen him, is terribly jealous of him, and says that if the good judges do not put him down at once, the villainous taste of the public will set him up as a prodigy. A low-lived fellow too, I hear. There is the name of the man and the subject of the pictures. See to it when the time comes. Meanwhile, prepare the way for onslaught on the pictures by occasional sneers at the painter." Here Mr. Mivers took out of his cylinder a confidential note from the jealous rival and handed it to his mild-looking *confrère*; then rising, he said, "I fear we must suspend our business till to-morrow; I expect two young cousins to breakfast."

As soon as the mild-looking man was gone, Mr. Mivers sauntered to his drawing-room window, amiably offering a lump of sugar to a canary-bird sent to him as a present the day before, and who, in the gilded cage which made part of the present, scanned him suspiciously, and refused the sugar.

Time had remained very gentle in its dealings with Chillingly Mivers. He scarcely looked a day older than when he was first presented to the reader on the birth of his kinsman Kenelm. He was reaping the fruit of his own sage maxims. Free from whiskers and safe in wig, there was no sign of grey--no suspicion of dye. Superiority to passion, abnegation of sorrow, indulgence of amusement, avoidance of excess, had kept away the crow's-feet, preserved the elasticity of his frame and the unflushed clearness of his gentlemanlike complexion. The door opened, and a well-dressed valet, who had lived long enough with

Mivers to grow very much like him, announced Mr. Chillingly Gordon.

"Good morning," said Mivers; "I was much pleased to see you talking so long and so familiarly with Danvers: others of course, observed it, and it added a step to your career. It does you great good to be seen in a drawing-room talking apart with a Somebody. But may I ask if the talk itself was satisfactory?"

"Not at all: Danvers throws cold water on the notion of Saxboro', and does not even hint that his party will help me to any other opening. Party has few openings at its disposal nowadays for any young man. The schoolmaster being abroad has swept away the school for statesmen as he has swept away the school for actors—an evil, and an evil of a far greater consequence to the destinies of the nation than any good likely to be got from the system that succeeded it."

"But it is of no use railing against things that can't be helped. If I were you, I would postpone all ambition of Parliament, and read for the bar."

"The advice is sound, but too unpalatable to be taken. I am resolved to find a seat in the House, and where there is a will there is a way."

"I am not so sure of that."

"But I am."

"Judging by what your contemporaries at the University tell me of your speeches at the Debating Society, you were not then an ultra-Radical. But it is only an ultra-Radical who has a chance of success at Saxboro'."

"I am no fanatic in politics. There is much to be said on all sides—*cæteris paribus*, I prefer the winning side to the losing: nothing succeeds like success."

"Ay, but in politics there is always reaction. The winning side one day may be the losing side another. The losing side represents a minority, and a minority is sure to comprise more intellect than a majority: in the long run intellect will force its way, get a majority and then lose it, because with a majority it will become stupid."

"Cousin Mivers, does not the history of the world show

you that a single individual can upset all theories as to the comparative wisdom of the few or the many? Take the wisest few you can find, and one man of genius not a tithe so wise crushes them into powder. But then that man of genius, though he despises the many, must make use of them. That done, he rules them. Don't you see how in free countries political destinations resolve themselves into individual impersonations? At a general election it is one name around which electors rally. The candidate may enlarge as much as he pleases on political principles, but all his talk will not win him votes enough for success, unless he says, 'I go with Mr. A.,' the Minister, or with Mr. Z., the chief of the opposition. It was not the Tories who beat the Whigs when Mr. Pitt dissolved Parliament. It was Mr. Pitt who beat Mr. Fox, with whom in general political principle—slave-trade, Roman Catholic emancipation, Parliamentary reform—he certainly agreed much more than he did with any man in his own Cabinet."

"Take care, my young cousin," cried Mivers, in accents of alarm; "don't set up for a man of genius. Genius is the worst quality a public man can have nowadays—nobody heeds it, and everybody is jealous of it."

"Pardon me, you mistake; my remark was purely objective, and intended as a reply to your argument. I prefer at present to go with the many because it is the winning side. If we then want a man of genius to keep it the winning side, by subjugating its partisans to his will, he will be sure to come. The few will drive him to us, for the few are always the enemies of the one man of genius. It is they who distrust—it is they who are jealous—not the many. You have allowed your judgment, usually so clear, to be somewhat dimmed by your experience as a critic. The critics are the *few*. They have infinitely more culture than the many. But when a man of real genius appears and asserts himself, the critics are seldom such fair judges of him as the many are. If he be not one of their oligarchical clique, they either abuse, or disparage, or affect to ignore him; though a time at last comes when, having gained the many, the critics acknowledge him. But the difference between the man of action and the author is this, that the

author rarely finds this acknowledgment till he is dead, and it is necessary to the man of action to enforce it while he is alive. But enough of this speculation: you ask me to meet Kenelm—is he not coming?”

“Yes, but I did not ask him till ten o'clock. I asked you at half-past nine, because I wished to hear about Danvers and Saxboro', and also to prepare you somewhat for your introduction to your cousin. I must be brief as to the last, for it is only five minutes to the hour, and he is a man likely to be punctual. Kenelm is in all ways your opposite. I don't know whether he is cleverer or less clever—there is no scale of measurement between you; but he is wholly void of ambition, and might possibly assist yours. He can do what he likes with Sir Peter; and considering how your poor father—a worthy man, but cantankerous—harassed and persecuted Sir Peter, because Kenelm came between the estate and you, it is probable that Sir Peter bears you a grudge, though Kenelm declares him incapable of it; and it would be well if you could annul that grudge in the father by conciliating the goodwill of the son.”

“I should be glad so to annul it: but what is Kenelm's weak side?—the turf? the hunting-field? women? poetry? One can only conciliate a man by getting on his weak side.”

“Hist! I see him from the windows. Kenelm's weak side was, when I knew him some years ago, and I rather fancy it still is——”

“Well, make haste! I hear his ring at your door-bell.”

“A passionate longing to find ideal truth in real life.”

“Ah!” said Gordon, “as I thought—a mere dreamer.”

CHAPTER V.

KENELM entered the room. The young cousins were introduced, shook hands, receded a step, and gazed at each other. It is scarcely possible to conceive a greater contrast outwardly than that between the two Chillingly representatives of the

rising generation. Each was silently impressed by the sense of that contrast. Each felt that the contrast implied antagonism, and that if they two met in the same arena it must be as rival combatants; still, by some mysterious intuition each felt a certain respect for the other, each divined in the other a power that he could not fairly estimate, but against which his own power would be strongly tasked to contend. So might exchange looks a thorough-bred deer-hound and a half-bred mastiff: the bystander could scarcely doubt which was the nobler animal, but he might hesitate which to bet on, if the two came to deadly quarrel. Meanwhile the thorough-bred deer-hound and the half-bred mastiff sniffed at each other in polite salutation. Gordon was the first to give tongue.

"I have long wished to know you personally," said he, throwing into his voice and manner that delicate kind of deference which a well-born cadet owes to the destined head of his house. "I cannot conceive how I missed you last night at Lady Beaumanoir's, where Mivers tells me he met you; but I left early."

Here Mivers led the way to the breakfast-room, and there seated, the host became the principal talker, running with lively glibness over the principal topics of the day—the last scandal, the last new book, the reform of the army, the reform of the turf, the critical state of Spain, and the *début* of an Italian singer. He seemed an embodied Journal, including the Leading Article, the Law Reports, Foreign Intelligence, the Court Circular, down to the Births, Deaths, and Marriages. Gordon from time to time interrupted this flow of soul with brief, trenchant remarks, which evinced his own knowledge of the subjects treated, and a habit of looking on all subjects connected with the pursuits and business of mankind from a high ground appropriated to himself, and through the medium of that blue glass which conveys a wintry aspect to summer landscapes. Kenelm said little, but listened attentively.

The conversation arrested its discursive nature, to settle upon a political chief—the highest in fame and station of that party to which Mivers professed—not to belong, he belonged to himself alone—but to appropinquate. Mivers spoke of this

chief with the greatest distrust, and in a spirit of general depreciation. Gordon acquiesced in the distrust and the depreciation, adding—"But he is master of the position, and must, of course, be supported through thick and thin for the present."

"Yes, for the present," said Mivers; "one has no option. But you will see some clever articles in *The Londoner* towards the close of the session, which will damage him greatly, by praising him in the wrong place, and deepening the alarm of important followers—an alarm now at work, though suppressed."

Here Kenelm asked, in humble tones, "Why Gordon thought that a Minister he considered so untrustworthy and dangerous must, for the present, be supported through thick and thin."

"Because at present a member elected so to support him would lose his seat if he did not: needs must when the devil drives."

KENELM.—"When the devil drives, I should have thought it better to resign one's seat on the coach; perhaps one might be of some use, out of it, in helping to put on the drag."

MIVERS.—"Cleverly said, Kenelm. But, metaphor apart, Gordon is right: a young politician must go with his party; a veteran journalist like myself is more independent. So long as the journalist blames everybody, he will have plenty of readers."

Kenelm made no reply, and Gordon changed the conversation from men to measures. He spoke of some Bills before Parliament with remarkable ability, evincing much knowledge of the subject, much critical acuteness, illustrating their defects, and proving the danger of their ultimate consequences.

Kenelm was greatly struck with the vigour of this cold, clear mind, and owned to himself that the House of Commons was a fitting place for its development.

"But," said Mivers, "would you not be obliged to defend these Bills if you were member for Saxboro'?"

"Before I answer your question, answer me this: dangerous as the Bills are, is it not necessary that they shall pass? Have not the public so resolved?"

"There can be no doubt of that."

"Then the member for Saxboro' cannot be strong enough to go against the public."

"Progress of the age!" said Kenelm, musingly. "Do you think the class of gentlemen will long last in England?"

"What do you call gentlemen? The aristocracy by birth?—the *gentilhommes*?"

"Nay, I suppose no laws can take away a man's ancestors, and a class of well-born men is not to be exterminated. But a mere class of well-born men—without duties, responsibilities, or sentiment of that which becomes good birth in devotion to country or individual honour—does no good to a nation. It is a misfortune which statesmen of democratic creed ought to recognise, that the class of the well-born cannot be destroyed—it must remain as it remained in Rome and remains in France, after all efforts to extirpate it, as the most dangerous class of citizens when you deprive it of the attributes which made it the most serviceable. I am not speaking of that class; I speak of that unclassified order peculiar to England, which, no doubt, forming itself originally from the ideal standard of honour and truth supposed to be maintained by the *gentilhommes*, or well-born, no longer requires pedigrees and acres to confer upon its members the designation of gentleman; and when I hear a 'gentleman' say that he has no option but to think one thing and say another, at whatever risk to his country, I feel as if in the progress of the age the class of gentleman was about to be superseded by some finer development of species."

Therewith Kenelm rose, and would have taken his departure, if Gordon had not seized his hand and detained him.

"My dear cousin, if I may so call you," he said, with the frank manner which was usual to him, and which suited well the bold expression of his face and the clear ring of his voice—"I am one of those who, from an over-dislike to sentimentality and cant, often make those not intimately acquainted with them think worse of their principles than they deserve. It may be quite true that a man who goes with his party dislikes the measures he feels bound to support, and says so openly when

among friends and relations, yet that man is not therefore devoid of loyalty and honour ; and I trust, when you know me better, you will not think it likely I should derogate from that class of gentlemen to which we both belong."

"Pardon me if I seemed rude," answered Kenelm; "ascribe it to my ignorance of the necessities of public life. It struck me that where a politician thought a thing evil, he ought not to support it as good. But I dare say I am mistaken."

"Entirely mistaken," said Mivers, "and for this reason: in politics formerly there was a direct choice between good and evil. That rarely exists now. Men of high education having to choose whether to accept or reject a measure forced upon their option by constituent bodies of very low education, are called upon to weigh evil against evil—the evil of accepting or the evil of rejecting; and if they resolve on the first, it is as the lesser evil of the two."

"Your definition is perfect," said Gordon, "and I am contented to rest on it my excuse for what my cousin deems insincerity."

"I suppose that is real life," said Kenelm, with his mournful smile.

"Of course it is," said Mivers.

"Every day I live," sighed Kenelm, "still more confirms my conviction that real life is a phantasmal sham. How absurd it is in philosophers to deny the existence of apparitions! what apparitions we, living men, must seem to the ghosts!

"The spirits of the wise
Sit in the clouds and mock us."

CHAPTER VI.

CHILLINGLY GORDON did not fail to confirm his acquaintance with Kenelm. He very often looked in upon him of a morning, sometimes joined him in his afternoon rides, introduced him to men of his own set who were mostly busy members of Parlia-

ment, rising barristers, or political journalists, but not without a proportion of brilliant idlers—club men, sporting men, men of fashion, rank, and fortune. He did so with a purpose, for these persons spoke well of him—spoke well not only of his talents, but of his honourable character. His general nickname amongst them was “HONEST GORDON.” Kenelm at first thought this *sobriquet* must be ironical; not a bit of it. It was given to him on account of the candour and boldness with which he expressed opinions embodying that sort of cynicism which is vulgarly called “the absence of humbug.” The man was certainly no hypocrite; he affected no beliefs which he did not entertain. And he had very few beliefs in anything, except the first half of the adage, “Every man for himself,—and God for us all.”

But whatever Chillingly Gordon’s theoretical disbeliefs in things which make the current creed of the virtuous, there was nothing in his conduct which evinced predilection for vices: he was strictly upright in all his dealings, and in delicate matters of honour was a favourite umpire amongst his coevals. Though so frankly ambitious, no one could accuse him of attempting to climb on the shoulders of patrons. There was nothing servile in his nature, and though he was perfectly prepared to bribe electors if necessary, no money could have bought himself. His one master-passion was the desire of power. He sneered at patriotism as a worn-out prejudice, at philanthropy as a sentimental catch-word. He did not want to serve his country, but to rule it. He did not want to raise mankind, but to rise himself. He was therefore unscrupulous, unprincipled, as hungerers after power for itself too often are; yet still if he got power he would probably use it well, from the clearness and strength of his mental perceptions. The impression he made on Kenelm may be seen in the following letter:—

TO SIR PETER CHILLINGLY, BART., ETC.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—You and my dear mother will be pleased to hear that London continues very polite to me: that ‘*arida nutrix leonum*’ enrols me among the pet class of

lions which ladies of fashion admit into the society of their lapdogs. It is somewhere about six years since I was allowed to gaze on this peep-show through the loopholes of Mr. Welby's retreat. It appears to me, perhaps erroneously, that even within that short space of time the tone of 'society' is perceptibly changed. That the change is for the better is an assertion I leave to those who belong to the *progressista* party.

"I don't think nearly so many young ladies six years ago painted their eyelids and dyed their hair: a few of them there might be, imitators of the slang invented by schoolboys and circulated through the medium of small novelists; they might use such expressions as 'stunning,' 'cheek,' 'awfully jolly,' &c. But now I find a great many who have advanced to a slang beyond that of verbal expressions,—a slang of mind, a slang of sentiment, a slang in which very little seems left of the woman, and nothing at all of the lady.

"Newspaper essayists assert that the young men of the day are to blame for this; that the young men like it; and the fair husband-anglers dress their flies in the colours most likely to attract a nibble. Whether this excuse be the true one I cannot pretend to judge. But it strikes me that the men about my own age who affect to be fast are a more languid race than the men from ten to twenty years older, whom they regard as *slow*. The habit of dram-drinking in the morning is a very new idea, an idea greatly in fashion at the moment. Adonis calls for a 'pick-me-up' before he has strength enough to answer a *billet-doux* from Venus. Adonis has not the strength to get nobly drunk, but his delicate constitution requires stimulants, and he is always tipling.

"The men of high birth or renown for social success belonging, my dear father, to your time, are still distinguished by an air of good-breeding, by a style of conversation more or less polished and not without evidences of literary culture, from men of the same rank in my generation, who appear to pride themselves on respecting nobody and knowing nothing, not even grammar. Still we are assured that the world goes on steadily improving. *That new idea is in full vigour,*

"Society in the concrete has become wonderfully conceited as to its own progressive excellences, and the individuals who form the concrete entertain the same complacent opinion of themselves. There are, of course, even in my brief and imperfect experience, many exceptions to what appear to me the prevalent characteristics of the rising generation in 'society.' Of these exceptions I must content myself with naming the most remarkable. *Place aux dames*, the first I name is Cecilia Travers. She and her father are now in town, and I meet them frequently. I can conceive no civilised era in the world which a woman like Cecilia Travers would not grace and adorn, because she is essentially the type of woman as man likes to imagine woman—viz., on the fairest side of the womanly character. And I say 'woman' rather than girl, because among 'Girls of the Period' Cecilia Travers cannot be classed. You might call her damsel, virgin, maiden, but you could no more call her girl than you could call a well-born French demoiselle '*fille*.' She is handsome enough to please the eye of any man, however fastidious, but not that kind of beauty which dazzles all men too much to fascinate one man; for—speaking, thank Heaven, from mere theory—I apprehend that the love for woman has in it a strong sense of property; that one requires to individualise one's possession as being wholly one's own, and not a possession which all the public are invited to admire. I can readily understand how a rich man, who has what is called a show place, in which the splendid rooms and the stately gardens are open to all inspectors, so that he has no privacy in his own demesnes, runs away to a pretty cottage which he has all to himself, and of which he can say, '*This is Home—this is all mine.*'

"But there are some kinds of beauty which are eminently show places—which the public think they have as much a right to admire as the owner has; and the show place itself would be dull and perhaps fall out of repair, if the public could be excluded from the sight of it.

"The beauty of Cecilia Travers is not that of a show place. There is a feeling of safety in her. If Desdemona had been like her, Othello would not have been jealous. But then

Cecilia would not have deceived her father—nor I think have told a blackamoor that she wished ‘Heaven had made her such a man.’ Her mind harmonises with her person—it is a companionable mind. Her talents are not showy, but, take them altogether, they form a pleasant whole: she has good sense enough in the practical affairs of life, and enough of that ineffable womanly gift called tact to counteract the effects of whimsical natures like mine, and yet enough sense of the humoristic views of life not to take too literally all that a whimsical man like myself may say. As to temper, one never knows what a woman’s temper is—till one puts her out of it. But I imagine hers, in its normal state, to be serene, and disposed to be cheerful. Now, my dear father, if you were not one of the cleverest of men you would infer from this eulogistic mention of Cecilia Travers that I was in love with her. But you no doubt will detect the truth, that a man in love with a woman does not weigh her merits with so steady a hand as that which guides this steel pen. I am not in love with Cecilia Travers. I wish I were. When Lady Glenalvon, who remains wonderfully kind to me, says, day after day, ‘Cecilia Travers would make you a perfect wife,’ I have no answer to give, but I don’t feel the least inclined to ask Cecilia Travers if she would waste her perfection on one who so coldly concedes it.

“I find that she persisted in rejecting the man whom her father wished her to marry, and that he has consoled himself by marrying somebody else. No doubt other suitors as worthy will soon present themselves.

“Oh, dearest of all my friends—sole friend whom I regard as a confidant—shall I ever be in love? and if not, why not? Sometimes I feel as if, with love as with ambition, it is because I have some impossible ideal in each, that I must always remain indifferent to the sort of love and the sort of ambition which are within my reach. I have an idea that if I did love, I should love as intensely as Romeo, and that thought inspires me with vague forebodings of terror; and if I did find an object to arouse my ambition, I could be as earnest in its pursuit as—whom shall I name?—Cæsar or Cato? I like Cato’s ambition

the better of the two. But people nowadays call ambition an impracticable crotchet, if it be invested on the losing side. Cato would have saved Rome from the mob and the dictator; but Rome could not be saved, and Cato falls on his own sword. Had we a Cato now, the verdict at a coroner's inquest would be, 'suicide while in a state of unsound mind;' and the verdict would have been proved by his senseless resistance to a mob and a dictator! Talking of ambition, I come to the other exception to the youth of the day—I have named a *demoiselle*, I now name a *damoiseau*. Imagine a man of about five-and-twenty, and who is morally about fifty years older than a healthy man of sixty,—imagine him with the brain of age and the flower of youth—with a heart absorbed into the brain, and giving warm blood to frigid ideas—a man who sneers at everything I call lofty, yet would do nothing that *he* thinks mean—to whom vice and virtue are as indifferent as they were to the *Æsthetics* of Goethe—who would never jeopardise his career as a practical reasoner by an imprudent virtue, and never sully his reputation by a degrading vice. Imagine this man with an intellect keen, strong, ready, unscrupulous, dauntless—all cleverness and no genius. Imagine this man, and then do not be astonished when I tell you he is a Chillingly.

"The Chillingly race culminates in him, and becomes Chillinglyest. In fact, it seems to me that we live in a day precisely suited to the Chillingly idiosyncrasies. During the ten centuries or more that our race has held local habitation and a name, it has been as airy nothings. Its representatives lived in hot-blooded times, and were compelled to skulk in still water with their emblematic daces. But the times now, my dear father, are so cold-blooded that you can't be too cold-blooded to prosper. What could Chillingly Mivers have been in an age when people cared twopence-halfpenny about their religious creeds, and their political parties deemed their cause was sacred, and their leaders were heroes? Chillingly Mivers would not have found five subscribers to *The Londoner*. But now *The Londoner* is the favourite organ of the intellectual public; it sneers away all the foundations of the social system, without an attempt at reconstruction; and every new journal

set up, if it keep its head above water, models itself on *The Londoner*. Chillingly Mivers is a great man, and the most potent writer of the age, though nobody knows what he has written. Chillingly Gordon is a still more notable instance of the rise of the Chillingly worth in the modern market.

"There is a general impression in the most authoritative circles that Chillingly Gordon will have high rank in the van of the coming men. His confidence in himself is so thorough that it infects all with whom he comes into contact—myself included.

"He said to me the other day, with a *sang-froid* worthy of the iciest Chillingly, 'I mean to be Prime Minister of England—it is only a question of time.' Now, if Chillingly Gordon is to be Prime Minister, it will be because the increasing cold of our moral and social atmosphere will exactly suit the development of his talents.

"He is the man above all others to argue down the declaimers of old-fashioned sentimentalities, love of country, care for its position among nations, zeal for its honour, pride in its renown. (Oh, if you could hear him philosophically and logically sneer away the word 'prestige!') Such notions are fast being classified as 'bosh.' And when that classification is complete—when England has no colonies to defend, no navy to pay for, no interest in the affairs of other nations, and has attained to the happy condition of Holland,—then Chillingly Gordon will be her Prime Minister.

"Yet while, if ever I am stung into political action, it will be by abnegation of the Chillingly attributes, and in opposition, however hopeless, to Chillingly Gordon, I feel that this man cannot be suppressed and ought to have fair play; his ambition will be infinitely more dangerous if it become soured by delay. I propose, my dear father, that you should have the honour of laying this clever kinsman under an obligation, and enabling him to enter Parliament. In our last conversation at Exmundham, you told me of the frank resentment of Gordon *père*, when my coming into the world shut him out from the Exmundham inheritance; you confided to me your intention at that time to lay by yearly a sum that might

ultimately serve as a provision for Gordon *filis*, and as some compensation for the loss of his expectations when you realised your hope of an heir; you told me also how this generous intention on your part had been frustrated by a natural indignation at the elder Gordon's conduct in his harassing and costly litigation and by the addition you had been tempted to make to the estate in a purchase which added to its acreage, but at a rate of interest which diminished your own income, and precluded the possibility of further savings. Now, chancing to meet your lawyer, Mr. Vining, the other day, I learned from him that it had been long a wish which your delicacy prevented your naming to me, that I, to whom the fee-simple descends, should join with you in cutting off the entail and resettling the estate. He showed me what an advantage this would be to the property, because it would leave your hands free for many improvements in which I heartily go with the progress of the age, for which, as merely tenant for life, you could not raise the money except upon ruinous terms; new cottages for labourers, new building for tenants, the consolidation of some old mortgages and charges on the rent-roll, &c. And allow me to add that I should like to make a large increase to the jointure of my dear mother. Vining says, too, that there is a part of the outlying land which, as being near a town, could be sold to considerable profit if the estate were resettled.

"Let us hasten to complete the necessary deeds, and so obtain the 20,000*l.* required for the realisation of your noble, and let me add, your just desire to do something for Chillingly Gordon. In the new deeds of settlement we could insure the power of willing the estate as we pleased, and I am strongly against devising it to Chillingly Gordon. It may be a crotchet of mine, but one which I think you share, that the owner of English soil should have a son's love for the native land, and Gordon will never have that. I think, too, that it will be best for his own career, and for the establishment of a frank understanding between us and himself, that he should be fairly told that he would not be benefited in the event of our death. Twenty thousand pounds given to him now would be a greater boon to him than ten times the sum twenty years later. With that at his

command, he can enter Parliament, and have an income, added to what he now possesses, if modest, still sufficient to make him independent of a Minister's patronage.

"Pray humour me, my dearest father, in the proposition I venture to submit to you.—Your affectionate son,

"KENELM."

FROM SIR PETER CHILLINGLY TO KENELM CHILLINGLY.

"MY DEAR BOY,—You are not worthy to be a Chillingly; you are decidedly warm-blooded: never was a load lifted off a man's mind with a gentler hand. Yes, I have wished to cut off the entail and resettle the property; but as it was eminently to my advantage to do so, I shrank from asking it, though eventually it would be almost as much to your own advantage. What with the purchase I made of the Faircleuch lands—which I could only effect by money borrowed at high interest on my personal security, and paid off by yearly instalments, eating largely into income—and the old mortgages, &c., I own I have been pinched of late years. But what rejoices me the most is the power to make homes for our honest labourers more comfortable, and nearer to their work, which last is the chief point, for the old cottages in themselves are not bad; the misfortune is, when you build an extra room for the children, the silly people let it out to a lodger.

"My dear boy, I am very much touched by your wish to increase your mother's jointure—a very proper wish, independently of filial feeling, for she brought to the estate a very pretty fortune, which the trustees consented to my investing in land; and though the land completed our ring-fence, it does not bring in two per cent., and the conditions of the entail limited the right of jointure to an amount below that which a widowed Lady Chillingly may fairly expect.

"I care more about the provision on these points than I do for the interests of old Chillingly Gordon's son. I had meant to behave very handsomely to the father; and when the return for behaving handsomely is being put into Chancery—A Worm Will Turn. Nevertheless, I agree with you that a

son should not be punished for his father's faults; and if the sacrifice of 20,000*l.* makes you and myself feel that we are better Christians and truer gentlemen, we shall buy that feeling very cheaply."

Sir Peter then proceeded, half jestingly, half seriously, to comba' Kenelm's declaration that he was not in love with Cecilia Travers; and, urging the advantages of marriage with one whom Kenelm allowed would be a perfect wife; astutely remarked that unless Kenelm had a son of his own it did not seem to him quite just to the next of kin to will the property from him, upon no better plea than the want of love for his native country. "He would love his country fast enough if he had 10,000 acres in it."

Kenelm shook his head when he came to this sentence.

"Is even, then, love for one's country but cupboard-love after all?" said he; and he postponed finishing the perusal of his father's letter.

CHAPTER VII.

KENELM CHILLINGLY did not exaggerate the social position he had acquired when he classed himself amongst the lions of the fashionable world. I dare not count the number of three-cornered notes showered upon him by the fine ladies who grow romantic upon any kind of celebrity; or the carefully-sealed envelopes, containing letters from fair Anonymas, who asked if he had a heart, and would be in such a place in the Park at such an hour. What there was in Kenelm Chillingly that should make him thus favoured, especially by the fair sex, it would be difficult to say, unless it was the twofold reputation of being unlike other people, and of being unaffectedly indifferent to the gain of any reputation at all. He might, had he so pleased, have easily established a proof that the prevalent though vague belief in his talents was not altogether unjustified. For the articles he had sent from abroad to *The*

Londoner and by which his travelling expenses were defrayed, had been stamped by that sort of originality in tone and treatment which rarely fails to excite curiosity as to the author, and meets with more general praise than perhaps it deserves.

But Mivers was true to his contract to preserve inviolable the incognito of the author, and Kenelm regarded with profound contempt the articles themselves, and the readers who praised them.

Just as misanthropy with some persons grows out of benevolence disappointed, so there are certain natures—and Kenelm Chillingly's was perhaps one of them—in which indifference grows out of earnestness baffled.

He had promised himself pleasure in renewing acquaintance with his old tutor, Mr. Welby—pleasure in refreshing his own taste for metaphysics and casuistry and criticism. But that accomplished professor of realism had retired from philosophy altogether, and was now enjoying a holiday for life in the business of a public office. A Minister in favour of whom, when in opposition, Mr. Welby, in a moment of whim, wrote some very able articles in a leading journal, had, on acceding to power, presented the realist with one of those few good things still left to Ministerial patronage—a place worth about 1,200*l.* a-year. His mornings thus engaged in routine work, Mr. Welby enjoyed his evenings in a convivial way.

"Inveni portum," he said to Kenelm; "I plunge into no troubled waters now. But come and dine with me to-morrow, *tête-à-tête*. My wife is at St. Leonard's with my youngest born for the benefit of sea-air." Kenelm accepted the invitation.

The dinner would have contented a Brillat-Savarin—it was faultless; and the claret was that rare nectar, the Lafitte of 1848.

"I never share this," said Welby, "with more than one friend at a time."

Kenelm sought to engage his host in discussion on certain new works in vogue, and which were composed according to purely realistic canons of criticism. "The more realistic these books pretend to be, the less real they are," said Kenelm. "I am half inclined to think that the whole school you so systema-

tically sought to build up is a mistake, and that realism in art is a thing impossible."

"I dare say you are right. I took up that school in earnest because I was in a passion with pretenders to the Idealistic school; and whatever one takes up in earnest is generally a mistake, especially if one is in a passion. I was not in earnest and I was not in a passion when I wrote those articles to which I am indebted for my office." Mr. Welby here luxuriously stretched his limbs, and lifting his glass to his lips, voluptuously inhaled its *bouquet*.

"You sadden me," returned Kenelm. "It is a melancholy thing to find that one's mind was influenced in youth by a teacher who mocks at his own teachings."

Welby shrugged his shoulders. "Life consists in the alternate process of learning and unlearning; but it is often wiser to unlearn than to learn. For the rest, as I have ceased to be a critic, I care little whether I was wrong or right when I played that part. I think I am right now as a placeman. Let the world go its own way, provided the world lets you live upon it. I drain my wine to the lees, and cut down hope to the brief span of life. Reject realism in art if you please, and accept realism in conduct. For the first time in my life I am comfortable: my mind having worn out its walking-shoes, is now enjoying the luxury of slippers. Who can deny the realism of comfort?"

"Has a man a right," Kenelm said to himself, as he entered his brougham, "to employ all the brilliancy of a rare wit—all the acquisitions of as rare a scholarship—to the scaring of the young generation out of the safe old roads which youth left to itself would take—old roads skirted by romantic rivers and bowery trees—directing them into new paths on long sandy flats, and then, when they are faint and footsore, to tell them that he cares not a pin whether they have worn out their shoes in right paths or wrong paths, for that he has attained the *summum bonum* of philosophy in the comfort of easy slippers?"

Before he could answer the question he thus put to himself, his brougham stopped at the door of the Minister whom Welby had contributed to bring into power.

That night there was a crowded muster of the fashionable world at the great man's house. It happened to be a very critical moment for the Minister. The fate of his cabinet depended on the result of a motion about to be made the following week in the House of Commons. The great man stood at the entrance of the apartments to receive his guests, and among the guests were the framers of the hostile motion and the leaders of the Opposition. His smile was not less gracious to them than to his dearest friends and staunchest supporters.

"I suppose this is realism," said Kenelm to himself; "but it is not truth, and it is not comfort." Leaning against the wall near the doorway, he contemplated with grave interest the striking countenance of his distinguished host. He detected beneath that courteous smile and that urbane manner the signs of care. The eye was absent, the cheek pinched, the brow furrowed. Kenelm turned away his looks, and glanced over the animated countenances of the idle loungers along commoner thoroughfares in life. Their eyes were not absent, their brows were not furrowed; their minds seemed quite at home in exchanging nothings. Interest many of them had in the approaching struggle, but it was much such an interest as betters of small sums may have on the Derby day—just enough to give piquancy to the race; nothing to make gain a great joy, or loss a keen anguish.

"Our host is looking ill," said Mivers, accosting Kenelm. "I detect symptoms of suppressed gout. You know my aphorism, 'nothing so gouty as ambition,' especially Parliamentary ambition."

"You are not one of those friends who press on my choice of life that source of disease; allow me to thank you."

"Your thanks are misplaced. I strongly advise you to devote yourself to a political career."

"Despite the gout?"

"Despite the gout. If you could take the world as I do, my advice might be different. But your mind is overcrowded with doubts and fantasies and crotchets, and you have no choice but to give them vent in active life."

"You had something to do in making me what I am—an idler; something to answer for as to my doubts, fantasies, and crotchets. It was by your recommendation that I was placed under the tuition of Mr. Welby, and at that critical age in which the bent of the twig forms the shape of the tree."

"And I pride myself on that counsel. I repeat the reasons for which I gave it: it is an incalculable advantage for a young man to start in life thoroughly initiated into the New Ideas which will more or less influence his generation. Welby was the ablest representative of these ideas. It is a wondrous good fortune when the propagandist of the New Ideas is something more than a bookish philosopher—when he is a thorough 'man of the world,' and is what we emphatically call 'practical.' Yes, you owe me much that I secured to you such tuition, and saved you from twaddle and sentiment, the poetry of Wordsworth and the muscular Christianity of Cousin John."

"What you say that you saved me from might have done me more good than all you conferred on me. I suspect that when education succeeds in placing an old head upon young shoulders, the combination is not healthful—it clogs the blood and slackens the pulse. However, I must not be ungrateful; you meant kindly. Yes, I suppose Welby is practical; he has no belief, and he has got a place. But our host, I presume, is also practical; his place is a much higher one than Welby's, and yet he is surely not without belief?"

"He was born before the new ideas came into practical force; but in proportion as they have done so, his beliefs have necessarily disappeared. I don't suppose that he believes in much now, except the two propositions, firstly, that if he accept the new ideas, he will have power and keep it, and if he does not accept them, power is out of the question; and secondly that if the new ideas are to prevail, he is the best man to direct them safely,—beliefs quite enough for a Minister. No wise Minister should have more."

"Does he not believe that the motion he is to resist next week is a bad one?"

"A bad one of course, in its consequences, for if it succeed it will upset him; a good one in itself I am sure he must

think it, for he would bring it on himself if he were in opposition."

"I see that Pope's definition is still true, 'Party is the madness of the many for the gain of the few.'"

"No, it is not true. Madness is a wrong word applied to the many; the many are sane enough—they know their own objects, and they make use of the intellect of the few in order to gain their objects. In each party it is the many that control the few who nominally lead them. A man becomes Prime Minister because he seems to the many of his party the fittest person to carry out their views. If he presume to differ from these views, they put him into a moral pillory, and pelt him with their dirtiest stones and their rottenest eggs."

"Then the maxim should be reversed, and party is rather the madness of the few for the gain of the many?"

"Of the two, that is the more correct definition."

"Let me keep my senses and decline to be one of the few."

Kenelm moved away from his cousin's side, and entering one of the less crowded rooms, saw Cecilia Travers seated there in a recess with Lady Glenalvon. He joined them, and after a brief interchange of a few commonplaces, Lady Glenalvon quitted her post to accost a foreign ambassadress, and Kenelm sank into the chair she vacated.

It was a relief to his eye to contemplate Cecilia's candid brow; to his ear to hearken to the soft voice that had no artificial tones, and uttered no cynical witticisms.

"Don't you think it strange," said Kenelm, "that we English should so mould all our habits as to make even what we call pleasure as little pleasurable as possible? We are now in the beginning of June, the fresh outburst of summer, when every day in the country is a delight to eye and ear, and we say, 'the season for hot rooms is beginning.' We alone of civilised races spend our summer in a capital, and cling to the country when the trees are leafless and the brooks frozen."

"Certainly that is a mistake; but I love the country in all seasons, even in winter."

"Provided the country house is full of London people?"

"No; that is rather a drawback. I never want companions in the country."

"True; I should have remembered that you differ from young ladies in general, and make companions of books. They are always more conversable in the country than they are in town; or rather, we listen there to them with less distracted attention. Ha! do I not recognise yonder the fair whiskers of George Belvoir? Who is the lady leaning on his arm?"

"Don't you know?"—Lady Emily Belvoir, his wife."

"Ah! I was told that he had married. The lady is handsome. She will become the family diamonds. Does she read Blue-books?"

"I will ask her if you wish."

"Nay, it is scarcely worth while. During my rambles abroad, I saw but few English newspapers. I did, however, learn that George had won his election. Has he yet spoken in Parliament?"

"Yes; he moved the answer to the address this session, and was much complimented on the excellent tone and taste of his speech. He spoke again a few weeks afterwards, I fear not so successfully."

"Coughed down?"

"Something like it."

"Do him good; he will recover the cough, and fulfil my prophecy of his success."

"Have you done with poor George for the present? If so, allow me to ask whether you have quite forgotten Will Somers and Jessie Wiles?"

"Forgotten them! no."

"But you have never asked after them?"

"I took it for granted that they were as happy as could be expected. Pray assure me that they are."

"I trust so now; but they have had trouble, and have left Graveleigh."

"Trouble! left Graveleigh! You make me uneasy. Pray explain."

"They had not been three months married and installed in

the home they owed to you, when poor Will was seized with a rheumatic fever. He was confined to his bed for many weeks; and when at last he could move from it, was so weak as to be still unable to do any work. During his illness Jessie had no heart and little leisure to attend to the shop. Of course I—that is, my dear father—gave them all necessary assistance; but——”

“I understand; they were reduced to objects of charity. Brute that I am, never to have thought of the duties I owed to the couple I had brought together. But pray go on.”

“You are aware that just before you left us my father received a proposal to exchange his property at Graveleigh for some lands more desirable to him?”

“I remember. He closed with that offer.”

“Yes; Captain Stavers, the new landlord of Graveleigh, seems to be a very bad man; and though he could not turn the Somerses out of the cottage so long as they paid rent—which we took care they did pay—yet out of a very wicked spite he set up a rival shop in one of his other cottages in the village, and it became impossible for these poor young people to get a livelihood at Graveleigh.”

“What excuse for spite against so harmless a young couple could Captain Stavers find or invent?”

Cecilia looked down and coloured. “It was a revengeful feeling against Jessie.”

“Ah, I comprehend.”

“But they have now left the village, and are happily settled elsewhere. Will has recovered his health, and they are prospering much more than they could ever have done at Graveleigh.”

“In that change you were their benefactress, Miss Travers?” said Kenelm, in a more tender voice and with a softer eye than he had ever before evinced towards the heiress.

“No, it is not I whom they have to thank and bless.”

“Who, then, is it? Your father?”

“No. Do not question me; I am bound not to say. They do not themselves know; they rather believe that their gratitude is due to you.”

"To me! Am I to be for ever a sham in spite of myself? My dear Miss Travers, it is essential to my honour that I should undeceive this credulous pair; where can I find them?"

"I must not say; but I will ask permission of their concealed benefactor, and send you their address."

A touch was laid on Kenelm's arm, and a voice whispered—"May I ask you to present me to Miss Travers?"

"Miss Travers," said Kenelm, "I entreat you to add to the list of your acquaintances a cousin of mine—Mr. Chillingly Gordon."

While Gordon addressed to Cecilia the well-bred conventionalisms with which acquaintance in London drawing-rooms usually commences, Kenelm, obedient to a sign from Lady Glenalvon, who had just re-entered the room, quitted his seat, and joined the Marchioness.

"Is not that young man whom you left talking with Miss Travers your clever cousin Gordon?"

"The same."

"She is listening to him with great attention. How his face brightens up as he talks! He is positively handsome, thus animated."

"Yes, I could fancy him a dangerous wooer. He has wit, and liveliness, and audacity; he could be very much in love with a great fortune, and talk to the owner of it with a fervour rarely exhibited by a Chillingly. Well, it is no affair of mine."

"It ought to be."

"Alas and alas! that 'ought to be;' what depths of sorrowful meaning lie within that simple phrase! How happy would be our lives, how grand our actions, how pure our souls, if all could be with us as it ought to be!"

CHAPTER VIII

WE often form cordial intimacies in the confined society of a country house, or a quiet watering-place, or a small Continental town, which fade away into remote acquaintanceship in the mighty vortex of London life, neither party being to blame for the estrangement. It was so with Leopold Travers and Kenelm Chillingly. Travers, as we have seen, had felt a powerful charm in the converse of the young stranger, so in contrast with the routine of the rural companionships to which his alert intellect had for many years circumscribed its range. But, on reappearing in London the season before Kenelm again met him, he had renewed old friendships with men of his own standing,—officers in the regiment of which he had once been a popular ornament, some of them still unmarried, a few of them like himself, widowed; others who had been his rivals in fashion, and were still pleasant idlers about town; and it rarely happens in a metropolis that we have intimate friendships with those of another generation, unless there be some common tie in the cultivation of art and letters, or the action of kindred sympathies in the party strife of politics. Therefore Travers and Kenelm had had little familiar communication with each other since they first met at the Beaumanoirs'. Now and then they found themselves at the same crowded assemblies, and interchanged nods and salutations. But their habits were different. The houses at which they were intimate were not the same; neither did they frequent the same clubs. Kenelm's chief bodily exercise was still that of long and early rambles into rural suburbs; Leopold's was that of a late ride in the Row. Of the two, Leopold was much more the man of pleasure. Once restored to metropolitan life, a temper constitutionally eager, ardent, and convivial took kindly, as in earlier youth, to its light range of enjoyments.

Had the intercourse between the two men been as frankly familiar as it had been at Neesdale Park, Kenelm would probably have seen much more of Cecilia at her own home; and

the admiration and esteem with which she already inspired him might have ripened into much warmer feeling, had he thus been brought into clearer comprehension of the soft and womanly heart, and its tender predisposition towards himself.

He had said somewhat vaguely in his letter to Sir Peter, that "sometimes he felt as if his indifference to love, as to ambition, was because he had some impossible ideal in each." Taking that conjecture to task, he could not honestly persuade himself that he had formed any ideal of woman and wife with which the reality of Cecilia Travers was at war. On the contrary, the more he thought over the characteristics of Cecilia, the more they seemed to correspond to any ideal that had floated before him in the twilight of dreamy reverie, and yet he knew that he was not in love with her, that his heart did not respond to his reason. And mournfully he resigned himself to the conviction that nowhere in this planet, from the normal pursuits of whose inhabitants he felt so estranged, was there waiting for him the smiling playmate, the earnest helpmate. As this conviction strengthened, so an increased weariness of the artificial life of the metropolis, and of all its objects and amusements, turned his thoughts with an intense yearning towards the Bohemian freedom and fresh excitements of his foot ramblings. He often thought with envy of the wandering minstrel, and wondered whether, if he again traversed the same range of country, he might encounter again that vagrant singer.

CHAPTER IX.

IT is nearly a week since Kenelm had met Cecilia, and he is sitting in his rooms with Lord Thetford at that hour of three in the afternoon which is found the most difficult to dispose of by idlers about town. Amongst young men of his own age and class with whom Kenelm assorted in the fashionable world, perhaps the one whom he liked the best, and of whom he saw the most, was this young heir of the Beau-

manoirs; and though Lord Thetford has nothing to do with the direct stream of my story, it is worth pausing a few minutes to sketch an outline of one of the best whom the last generation has produced for a part that, owing to accidents of birth and fortune, young men like Lord Thetford must play on that stage from which the curtain is not yet drawn up. Destined to be the head of a family that unites with princely possessions and an historical name a keen though honourable ambition for political power, Lord Thetford has been carefully educated, especially in the new ideas of his time. His father, though a man of no ordinary talents, has never taken a prominent part in public life. He desires his eldest son to do so. The Beaumanoirs have been Whigs from the time of William III. They have shared the good and the ill fortunes of a party which, whether we side with it or not, no politician who dreads extremes in the government of a State so preeminently artificial that a prevalent extreme at either end of the balance would be fatal to equilibrium, can desire to become extinct or feeble so long as a constitutional monarchy exists in England. From the reign of George I. to the death of George IV., the Beaumanoirs were in the ascendant. Visit their family portrait gallery, and you must admire the eminence of a house which, during that interval of less than a century, contributed so many men to the service of the State or the adornment of the Court—so many Ministers, Ambassadors, Generals, Lord Chamberlains, and Masters of the Horse. When the younger Pitt beat the great Whig Houses, the Beaumanoirs vanish into comparative obscurity; they re-emerge with the accession of William IV., and once more produce bulwarks of the State and ornaments of the Crown. The present Lord of Beaumanoir, *poco curante* in politics though he be, has at least held high offices at Court; and, as a matter of course, he is Lord Lieutenant of his county, as well as Knight of the Garter. He is a man whom the chiefs of his party have been accustomed to consult on critical questions. He gives his opinions confidentially and modestly, and when they are rejected never takes offence. He thinks that a time is coming when the head of the Beaumanoirs should descend into the lists and fight hand-to-hand with any Hodge or Hobson in the cause of his

country for the benefit of the Whigs. Too lazy or too old to do this himself, he says to his son, "You must do it: without effort of mine the thing may last my life. It needs effort of yours that the thing may last through your own."

Lord Thetford cheerfully responds to the paternal admonition. He curbs his natural inclinations, which are neither inelegant nor unmanly; for, on the one side, he is very fond of music and painting, an accomplished amateur, and deemed a sound connoisseur in both; and, on the other side, he has a passion for all field sports, and especially for hunting. He allows no such attractions to interfere with diligent attention to the business of the House of Commons. He serves in Committees, he takes the chair at public meetings on sanitary questions, or projects for social improvement, and acquits himself well therein. He has not yet spoken in debate, but he has only been two years in Parliament, and he takes his father's wise advice not to speak till the third. But he is not without weight among the well-born youth of the party, and has in him the stuff out of which, when it becomes seasoned, the Corinthian capitals of a Cabinet may be very effectively carved. In his own heart he is convinced that his party are going too far and too fast; but with that party he goes on light-heartedly, and would continue to do so if they went to Erebus. But he would prefer their going the other way. For the rest, a pleasant, bright-eyed young fellow, with vivid animal spirits; and, in the holiday moments of reprieve from public duty he brings sunshine into dragging hunting-fields, and a fresh breeze into heated ballrooms.

"My dear fellow," said Lord Thetford, as he threw aside his cigar, "I quite understand that you bore yourself—you have nothing else to do."

"What can I do?"

"Work."

"Work!"

"Yes, you are clever enough to feel that you have a mind; and mind is a restless inmate of body—it craves occupation of some sort, and regular occupation too; it needs its daily constitutional exercise. Do you give your mind that?"

"I am sure I don't know, but my mind is always busying itself about something or other."

"In a desultory way—with no fixed object."

"True."

"Write a book, and then it will have its constitutional."

"Nay, my mind is always writing a book (though it may not publish one), always jotting down impressions, or inventing incidents, or investigating characters; and between you and me, I do not think that I do bore myself so much as I did formerly. Other people bore me more than they did."

"Because you will not create an object in common with other people: come into Parliament, side with a party, and you have that object."

"Do you mean seriously to tell me that you are not bored in the House of Commons?"

"With the speakers very often, yes; but with the strife between the speakers, no. The House of Commons life has a peculiar excitement scarcely understood out of it; but you may conceive its charm when you observe that a man who has once been in the thick of it, feels forlorn and shelved if he lose his seat, and even repines when the accident of birth transfers him to the serener air of the Upper House. Try that life, Chillingly."

"I might if I were an ultra-Radical, a Republican, a Communist, a Socialist, and wished to upset everything existing, for then the strife would at least be a very earnest one."

"But could not you be equally in earnest against those revolutionary gentlemen?"

"Are you and your leaders in earnest against them? They don't appear to me so."

Thetford was silent for a minute. "Well, if you doubt the principles of my side, go with the other side. For my part, I and many of our party would be glad to see the Conservatives stronger."

"I have no doubt they would. No sensible man likes to be carried off his legs by the rush of the crowd behind him; and a crowd is less headlong when it sees a strong force arrayed against it in front. But it seems to me that, at present, Conservatism can but be what it now is—a party that may

combine for resistance, and will not combine for inventive construction. We are living in an age in which the process of unsettlement is going blindly at work, as if impelled by a Nemesis as blind as itself. New ideas come beating into surf and surge against those which former reasoners had considered as fixed banks and breakwaters; and the new ideas are so mutable, so fickle, that those which were considered novel ten years ago are deemed obsolete to-day, and the new ones of to-day will in their turn be obsolete to-morrow. And, in a sort of fatalism, you see statesmen yielding way to these successive mockeries of experiment—for they are experiments against experience—and saying to each other with a shrug of the shoulders, ‘Bismillah! it must be so; the country will have it, even though it sends the country to the dogs.’ I don’t feel sure that the country will not go there the sooner, if you can only strengthen the Conservative element enough to set it up in office, with the certainty of knocking it down again. Alas! I am too dispassionate a looker-on to be fit for a partisan; would I were not. Address yourself to my cousin Gordon.”

“Ay, Chillingly Gordon is a coming man, and has all the earnestness you find absent in party and in yourself.”

“You call him earnest?”

“Thoroughly, in the pursuit of one object—the advancement of Chillingly Gordon. If he get into the House of Commons, and succeed there, I hope he will never become my leader; for if he thought Christianity in the way of his promotion, he would bring in a bill for its abolition.”

“In that case would he still be your leader?”

“My dear Kenelm, you don’t know what is the spirit of party, and how easily it makes excuses for any act of its leader. Of course, if Gordon brought in a bill for the abolition of Christianity, it would be on the plea that the abolition was good for the Christians, and his followers would cheer that enlightened sentiment.”

“Ah,” said Kenelm, with a sigh, “I own myself the dullest of blockheads; for instead of tempting me into the field of party politics, your talk leaves me in stolid amaze that you do not take to your heels, where honour can only be saved by flight.”

"Pooh! my dear Chillingly, we cannot run away from the age in which we live—we must accept its conditions and make the best of them; and if the House of Commons be nothing else, it is a famous debating society and a capital club. Think over it. I must leave you now. I am going to see a picture at the Exhibition which has been most truculently criticised in *The Londoner*, but which I am assured, on good authority, is a work of remarkable merit. I can't bear to see a man snarled and sneered down, no doubt by jealous rivals, who have their influence in journals, so I shall judge of the picture for myself. If it be really as good as I am told, I shall talk about it to everybody I meet—and in matters of art I fancy my word goes for something. Study art, my dear Kenelm. No gentleman's education is complete if he don't know a good picture from a bad one. After the Exhibition I shall just have time for a canter round the Park before the debate of the session, which begins to-night."

With a light step the young man quitted the room, humming an air from the *Figaro* as he descended the stairs. From the window Kenelm watched him swinging himself with careless grace into his saddle and riding briskly down the street—in form and face and bearing, a very model of young, high-born, high-bred manhood. "The Venetians," muttered Kenelm, "decapitated Marino Faliero for conspiring against his own order—the nobles. The Venetians loved their institutions, and had faith in them. Is there such love and such faith among the English?"

As he thus soliloquised he heard a shrilling sort of squeak; and a showman stationed before his window the stage on which Punch satirises the laws and moralities of the world, "kills the beadle and defies the devil."

CHAPTER X.

KENELM turned from the sight of Punch and Punch's friend the cur, as his servant, entering, said, "A person from the country, who would not give his name, asked to see him."

Thinking it might be some message from his father, Kenelm ordered the stranger to be admitted, and in another minute there entered a young man of handsome countenance and powerful frame, in whom, after a surprised stare, Kenelm recognised Tom Bowles. Difficult indeed would have been that recognition to an unobservant beholder: no trace was left of the sullen bully or the village farrier; the expression of the face was mild and intelligent—more bashful than hardy; the brute strength of the form had lost its former clumsiness, the simple dress was that of a gentleman—to use an expressive idiom, the whole man was wonderfully "toned down."

"I am afraid, sir, I am taking a liberty," said Tom, rather nervously, twiddling his hat between his fingers.

"I should be a greater friend to liberty than I am if it were always taken in the same way," said Kenelm, with a touch of his saturnine humour; but then yielding at once to the warmer impulse of his nature, he grasped his old antagonist's hand and exclaimed, "My dear Tom, you are so welcome. I am so glad to see you. Sit down, man—sit down; make yourself at home."

"I did not know you were back in England, sir, till within the last few days; for you did say that when you came back I should see or hear from you," and there was a tone of reproach in the last words.

"I am to blame, forgive me," said Kenelm, remorsefully. "But how did you find me out? you did not then, I think, even know my name. That, however, it was easy enough to discover; but who gave you my address in this lodging?"

"Well, sir, it was Miss Travers; and she bade me come to you. Otherwise as you did not send for me, it was scarcely my place to call uninvited."

"But, my dear Tom, I never dreamed that you were in London. One don't ask a man whom one supposes to be more than a hundred miles off to pay one an afternoon call. You are still with your uncle, I presume? and I need not ask if all thrives well with you—you look a prosperous man, every inch of you, from crown to toe."

"Yes," said Tom; "thank you kindly, sir, I am doing well in the way of business, and my uncle is to give me up the whole concern at Christmas."

While Tom thus spoke Kenelm had summoned his servant, and ordered up such refreshments as could be found in the larder of a bachelor in lodgings. "And what brings you to town, Tom?"

"Miss Travers wrote to me about a little business which she was good enough to manage for me, and said you wished to know about it; and so, after turning it over in my mind for a few days, I resolved to come to town: indeed," added Tom, heartily, "I did wish to see your face again."

"But you talk riddles. What business of yours could Miss Travers imagine I wished to know about?"

Tom coloured high, and looked very embarrassed. Luckily the servant here entering with the refreshment-tray, allowed him time to recover himself. Kenelm helped him to a liberal slice of cold pigeon-pie, pressed wine on him, and did not renew the subject till he thought his guest's tongue was likely to be more freely set loose; then he said, laying a friendly hand on Tom's shoulders, "I have been thinking over what passed between me and Miss Travers. I wished to have the new address of Will Somers; she promised to write to his benefactor to ask permission to give it. You are that benefactor?"

"Don't say benefactor, sir. I will tell you how it came about if you will let me. You see, I sold my little place at Graveleigh to the new Squire, and when mother removed to Luscombe to be near me, she told me how poor Jessie had been annoyed by Captain Stavers, who seems to think his purchase included the young women on the property along with the standing timber; and I was half afraid that she had given some cause for his persecution, for you know she has a blink of those soft eyes of

hers that might charm a wise man out of his skin, and put a fool there instead."

"But I hope she has done with those blinks since her marriage."

"Well, and I honestly think she has. It is certain she did not encourage Captain Stavers, for I went over to Graveleigh myself on the sly, and lodged concealed with one of the cottagers who owed me a kindness; and one day, as I was at watch, I saw the Captain peering over the stile which divides Holmwood from the glebe—you remember Holmwood?"

"I can't say I do."

"The footway from the village to Squire Travers's goes through the wood, which is a few hundred yards at the back of Will Somers's orchard. Presently the Captain drew himself suddenly back from the stile, and disappeared among the trees, and then I saw Jessie coming from the orchard with a basket over her arm, and walking quick towards the wood. Then, sir, my heart sank. I felt sure she was going to meet the Captain. However, I crept along the hedgerow, hiding myself, and got into the wood almost as soon as Jessie got there, by another way. Under the cover of the brushwood I stole on till I saw the Captain come out from the copse on the other side of the path, and plant himself just before Jessie. Then I saw at once I had wronged her. She had not expected to see him, for she hastily turned back, and began to run homeward; but he caught her up, and seized her by the arm. I could not hear what he said, but I heard her voice quite sharp with fright and anger. And then he suddenly seized her round the waist, and she screamed, and I sprang forward——"

"And thrashed the Captain?"

"No, I did not," said Tom; "I had made a vow to myself that I never would be violent again if I could help it. So I took him with one hand by the cuff of the neck, and with the other by the waistband, and just pitched him on a bramble-bush—quite mildly. He soon picked himself up, for he is a dapper little chap, and became very blustering and abusive. But I kept my temper, and said, civilly, 'Little gentleman,

hard words break no bones; but if ever you molest Mrs. Somers again, I will carry you into her orchard, souse you into the duck-pond there, and call all the villagers to see you scramble out of it again; and I will do it now if you are not off. I dare say you have heard of my name—I am Tom Bowles.’ Upon that his face, which was before very red, grew very white, and muttering something I did not hear, he walked away.

“Jessie—I mean Mrs. Somers—seemed at first as much frightened at me as she had been at the Captain; and though I offered to walk with her to Miss Travers’s, where she was going with a basket which the young lady had ordered, she refused, and went back home. I felt hurt, and returned to my uncle’s the same evening; and it was not for months that I heard the Captain had been spiteful enough to set up an opposition shop, and that poor Will had been taken ill, and his wife was confined about the same time, and the talk was that they were in distress, and might have to be sold up.

“When I heard all this, I thought that after all it was my rough tongue that had so angered the Captain and been the cause of his spite, and so it was my duty to make it up to poor Will and his wife. I did not know how to set about mending matters, but I thought I’d go and talk to Miss Travers; and if ever there was a kind heart in a girl’s breast, hers is one.”

“You are right there, I guess. What did Miss Travers say?”

“Nay; I hardly know what she did say, but she set me thinking, and it struck me that Jessie—Mrs. Somers—had better move to a distance, and out of the Captain’s reach, and that Will would do better in a less out-of-the-way place. And then, by good luck, I read in the newspaper that a stationery and a fancy-work business, with a circulating library, was to be sold on moderate terms at Moleswich, the other side of London. So I took the train and went to the place, and thought the shop would just suit these young folks, and not be too much work for either; then I went to Miss Travers, and I had a lot of money lying by me from the sale of the old

forge and premises, which I did not know what to do with ; and so, to cut short a long story, I bought the business, and Will and his wife are settled at Moleswich, thriving and happy, I hope, sir."

Tom's voice quivered at the last words, and he turned aside quickly, passing his hand over his eyes.

Kenelm was greatly moved.

"And they don't know what you did for them?"

"To be sure not. I don't think Will would have let himself be beholden to me. Ah! the lad has a spirit of his own, and Jessie—Mrs. Somers—would have felt pained and humbled that I should even think of such a thing. Miss Travers managed it all. They take the money as a loan which is to be paid by instalments. They have sent Miss Travers more than one instalment already, so I know they are doing well."

"A loan from Miss Travers?"

"No ; Miss Travers wanted to have a share in it, but I begged her not. It made me happy to do what I did all myself ; and Miss Travers felt for me and did not press. They perhaps think it is Squire Travers (though he is not a man who would like to say it, for fear it should bring applicants on him), or some other gentleman who takes an interest in them."

"I always said you were a grand fellow, Tom. But you are grander still than I thought you."

"If there be any good in me, I owe it to you, sir. Think what a drunken, violent brute I was when I first met you. Those walks with you, and I may say that other gentleman's talk, and then that long kind letter I had from you, not signed in your name, and written from abroad—all these changed me, as the child is changed at nurse."

"You have evidently read a good deal since we parted."

"Yes ; I belong to our young men's library and institute ; and when of an evening I get hold of a book, especially a pleasant story-book, I don't care for other company."

"Have you never seen any other girl you could care for, and wish to marry?"

"Ah, sir," answered Tom, "a man does not go so mad for a

girl as I did for Jessie Wiles, and when it is all over, and he has come to his senses, put his heart into joint again as easily as if it were only a broken leg. I don't say that I may not live to love and to marry another woman—it is my wish to do so. But I know that I shall love Jessie to my dying day; but not sinfully, sir—not sinfully. I would not wrong her by a thought.”

There was a long pause.

At last Kenelm said—“You promised to be kind to that little girl with the flower-ball; what has become of her?”

“She is quite well, thank you, sir. My aunt has taken a great fancy to her, and so has my mother. She comes to them very often of an evening, and brings her work with her. A quick, intelligent little thing, and full of pretty thoughts. On Sundays, if the weather is fine, we stroll out together in the fields.”

“She has been a comfort to you, Tom.”

“Oh, yes.”

“And loves you?”

“I am sure she does; an affectionate, grateful child.”

“She will be a woman, soon, Tom, and may love you as a woman then.”

Tom looked indignant and rather scornful at that suggestion, and hastened to revert to the subject more immediately at his heart.

“Miss Travers said you would like to call on Will Somers and his wife; will you? Moleswich is not far from London, you know.”

“Certainly, I will call.”

“I do hope you will find them happy; and if so, perhaps you will kindly let me know; and—and—I wonder whether Jessie's child is like her? It is a boy—somehow or other I would rather it had been a girl.”

“I will write you full particulars. But why not come with me?”

“No, I don't think I could do that, just at present. It unsettled me sadly when I did again see her sweet face at Graveleigh, and she was still afraid of me too!—that was a sharp pang.”

"She ought to know what you have done for her, and will."

"On no account, sir ; promise me that. I should feel mean if I humbled them—that way."

"I understand, though I will not as yet make you any positive promise. Meanwhile, if you are staying in town, lodge with me ; my landlady can find you a room."

"Thank you heartily, sir ; but I go back by the evening train ; and, bless me ! how late it is now ! I must wish you good-bye. I have some commissions to do for my aunt, and I must buy a new doll for Susey."

"Susey is the name of the little girl with the flower-ball ?"

"Yes. I must run off now ; I feel quite light at heart seeing you again and finding that you receive me still so kindly, as if we were equals."

"Ah, Tom, I wish I was your equal—nay, half as noble as Heaven has made you !"

Tom laughed incredulously, and went his way.

"This mischievous passion of love," said Kenelm to himself, "has its good side, it seems, after all. If it was nearly making a wild beast of that brave fellow—nay, worse than wild beast, a homicide doomed to the gibbet—so, on the other hand, what a refined, delicate, chivalrous nature of gentleman it has developed out of the stormy elements of its first madness ! Yes, I will go and look at this new-married couple. I dare say they are already snarling and spitting at each other like cat and dog. Moleswich is within reach of a walk."

BOOK V

CHAPTER I.

TWO days after the interview recorded in the last chapter of the previous Book, Travers, chancing to call at Kenelm's lodgings, was told by his servant that Mr. Chillingly had left London, alone, and had given no orders as to forwarding letters. The servant did not know where he had gone, or when he would return.

Travers repeated this news incidentally to Cecilia, and she felt somewhat hurt that he had not written her a line respecting Tom's visit. She, however, guessed that he had gone to see the Somerses, and would return to town in a day or so. But weeks passed, the season drew to its close, and of Kenelm Chillingly she saw or heard nothing: he had wholly vanished from the London world. He had but written a line to his servant, ordering him to repair to Exmundham and await him there, and inclosing him a check to pay outstanding bills.

We must now follow the devious steps of the strange being who has grown into the hero of this story. He had left his apartment at daybreak long before his servant was up, with his knapsack, and a small portmanteau, into which he had thrust—besides such additional articles of dress as he thought he might possibly require, and which his knapsack could not contain—a few of his favourite books. Driving with these in a hack-cab to the Vauxhall station, he directed the portmanteau to be forwarded to Moleswich, and flinging the knapsack on

his shoulders, walked slowly along the drowsy suburbs that stretched far into the landscape, before, breathing more freely, he found some evidences of rural culture on either side of the high road. It was not, however, till he had left the roofs and trees of pleasant Richmond far behind him that he began to feel he was out of reach of the metropolitan disquieting influences. Finding at a little inn, where he stopped to breakfast, that there was a path along fields, and in sight of the river, through which he could gain the place of his destination, he then quitted the high road, and traversing one of the loveliest districts in one of our loveliest counties, he reached Moleswich about noon.

CHAPTER II.

ON entering the main street of the pretty town, the name of Somers, in gilt capitals, was sufficiently conspicuous over the door of a very imposing shop. It boasted two plate-glass windows, at one of which were tastefully exhibited various articles of fine stationery, embroidery patterns, &c.; at the other, no less tastefully, sundry specimens of ornamental basket-work.

Kenelm crossed the threshold and recognised behind the counter—fair as ever, but with an expression of face more staid, and a figure more rounded and matron-like—his old friend Jessie. There were two or three customers before her, between whom she was dividing her attention. While a handsome young lady, seated, was saying, in a somewhat loud, but cheery and pleasant voice, "Do not mind me, Mrs. Somers—I can wait," Jessie's quick eye darted towards the stranger, but too rapidly to distinguish his features, which, indeed, he turned away, and began to examine the baskets.

In a minute or so the other customers were served and had departed. And the voice of the lady was again heard—"Now, Mrs. Somers, I want to see your picture-books and toys. I am giving a little children's party this afternoon, and I want to make them as happy as possible."

"Somewhere or other, on this planet, or before my Monad was whisked away to it, I have heard that voice," muttered Kenelm. While Jessie was alertly bringing forth her toys and picture-books, she said, "I am sorry to keep you waiting, sir; but if it is the baskets you come about, I can call my husband."

"Do," said Kenelm.

"William—William," cried Mrs. Somers; and after a delay long enough to allow him to slip on his jacket, William Somers emerged from the back parlour.

His face had lost its old trace of suffering and ill health; it was still somewhat pale, and retained its expression of intellectual refinement.

"How you have improved in your art!" said Kenelm, heartily.

William started, and recognised Kenelm at once. He sprang forward and took Kenelm's outstretched hand in both his own, and, in a voice between laughing and crying, exclaimed—"Jessie, Jessie, it is he!—he whom we pray for every night. God bless you!—God bless and make you as happy as He permitted you to make me!"

Before this little speech was faltered out, Jessie was by her husband's side, and she added, in a lower voice, but tremulous with deep feeling—"And me too!"

"By your leave, Will," said Kenelm, and he saluted Jessie's white forehead with a kiss that could not have been kinder or colder if it had been her grandfather's.

Meanwhile the lady had risen noiselessly and unobserved, and stealing up to Kenelm, looked him full in the face.

"You have another friend here, sir, who has also some cause to thank you——"

"I thought I remembered your voice," said Kenelm, looking puzzled. "But pardon me if I cannot recall your features. Where have we met before?"

"Give me your arm when we go out, and I will bring myself to your recollection. But no: I must not hurry you away now. I will call again in half an hour. Mrs. Somers, meanwhile put up the things I have selected. I will take them away with me when I come back from the vicarage, where I have left

the pony-carriage." So, with a parting nod and smile to Kenelm, she turned away, and left him bewildered.

"But who is that lady, Will?"

"A Mrs. Braefield. She is a new comer."

"She may well be that, Will," said Jessie, smiling, "for she has only been married six months."

"And what was her name before she married?"

"I am sure I don't know, sir. It is only three months since we came here, and she has been very kind to us, and an excellent customer. Everybody likes her. Mr. Braefield is a city gentleman, and very rich; and they live in the finest house in the place, and see a great deal of company."

"Well, I am no wiser than I was before," said Kenelm. "People who ask questions very seldom are."

"And how did you find us out, sir?" said Jessie. "Oh! I guess," she added, with an arch glance and smile. "Of course, you have seen Miss Travers, and she told you."

"You are right. I first learned your change of residence from her, and thought I would come and see you, and be introduced to the baby—a boy, I understand? Like you, Will?"

"No, sir—the picture of Jessie."

"Nonsense, Will; it is you all over, even to its little hands."

"And your good mother, Will, how did you leave her?"

"Oh, sir!" cried Jessie, reproachfully; "do you think we could have the heart to leave mother—so lone and rheumatic too? She is tending baby, now—always does while I am in the shop."

Here Kenelm followed the young couple into the parlour, where, seated by the window, they found old Mrs. Somers reading the Bible and rocking the baby, who slept peacefully in its cradle.

"Will," said Kenelm, bending his dark face over the infant, "I will tell you a pretty thought of a foreign poet's, which has been thus badly translated:—

"'Blest babe, a boundless world this bed so narrow seems to thee;
Grow man, and narrower than this bed the boundless world shall be.'"¹

¹ Schiller.

"I don't think that is true, sir," said Will, simply; "for a happy home is a world wide enough for any man."

Tears started into Jessie's eyes; she bent down and kissed—not the baby—but the cradle. "Will made it." She added, blushing, "I mean the cradle, sir."

Time flew past while Kenelm talked with Will and the old mother, for Jessie was soon summoned back to the shop; and Kenelm was startled when he found the half-hour's grace allowed to him was over, and Jessie put her head in at the door and said, "Mrs. Braefield is waiting for you."

"Good-by, Will; I shall come to see you again soon; and my mother gives me a commission to buy I don't know how many specimens of your craft."

CHAPTER III.

A SMART pony phaeton, with a box for a driver in livery equally smart, stood at the shop-door.

"Now, Mr. Chillingly," said Mrs. Braefield, "it is my turn to run away with you; get in!"

"Eh!" murmured Kenelm, gazing at her with large dreamy eyes. "Is it possible?"

"Quite possible; get in. Coachman, home! Yes, Mr. Chillingly, you meet again that giddy creature whom you threatened to thrash; it would have served her right. I ought to feel so ashamed to recall myself to your recollection, and yet I am not a bit ashamed. I am proud to show you that I have turned out a steady, respectable woman, and, my husband tells me, a good wife."

"You have only been six months married, I hear," said Kenelm, drily. "I hope your husband will say the same six years hence."

"He will say the same sixty years hence, if we live as long."

"How old is he now?"

"Thirty-eight."

"When a man wants only two years of his hundredth, he probably has learned to know his own mind; but then, in most cases, very little mind is left to him to know."

"Don't be satirical, sir; and don't talk as if you were railing at marriage, when you have just left as happy a young couple as the sun ever shone upon; and owing—for Mrs. Somers has told me all about her marriage—owing their happiness to you."

"Their happiness to me! not in the least. I helped them to marry, and in spite of marriage, they helped each other to be happy."

"You are still unmarried yourself?"

"Yes, thank Heaven!"

"And are you happy?"

"No; I can't make myself happy—myself is a discontented brute."

"Then why do you say 'thank Heaven'?"

"Because it is a comfort to think I am not making somebody else unhappy."

"Do you believe that if you loved a wife who loved you, you should make her unhappy?"

"I am sure I don't know; but I have not seen a woman whom I could love as a wife. And we need not push our inquiries further. What has become of that ill-treated grey cob?"

"He was quite well, thank you, when I last heard of him."

"And the uncle who would have inflicted me upon you, if you had not so gallantly defended yourself?"

"He is living where he did live, and has married his house-keeper. He felt a delicate scruple against taking that step till I was married myself, and out of the way."

Here Mrs. Braefield, beginning to speak very hurriedly, as women who seek to disguise emotion often do, informed Kenelm how unhappy she had felt for weeks after having found an asylum with her aunt—how she had been stung by remorse and oppressed by a sense of humiliation at the thought of her folly and the odious recollection of Mr. Compton—how she had declared to herself that she would never marry any one now—never! How Mr. Braefield happened to be on a visit in the neighbourhood, and saw her at church—how he had sought an

introduction to her—and how at first she rather disliked him than not; but he was so good and so kind, and when at last he proposed—and she had frankly told him all about her girlish flight and infatuation—how generously he had thanked her for a candour which had placed her as high in his esteem as she had been before in his love. “And from that moment,” said Mrs. Braefield, passionately, “my whole heart leapt to him. And now you know all. And here we are at the Lodge.”

The pony phaeton went with great speed up a broad gravel-drive, bordered with rare evergreens and stopped at a handsome house with a portico in front, and a long conservatory at the garden side—one of those houses which belong to “city gentlemen,” and often contain more comfort and exhibit more luxury than many a stately manorial mansion.

Mrs. Braefield evidently felt some pride as she led Kenelm through the handsome hall, paved with Malvern tiles and adorned with Scagliola columns, and into a drawing-room furnished with much taste and opening on a spacious flower-garden.

“But where is Mr. Braefield?” asked Kenelm.

“Oh, he has taken the rail to his office; but he will be back long before dinner, and of course you dine with us.”

“You’re very hospitable, but——”

“No buts: I will take no excuse. Don’t fear that you shall have only mutton-chops and a rice-pudding; and besides, I have a children’s party coming at two o’clock, and there will be all sorts of fun. You are fond of children, I am sure?”

“I rather think I am not. But I have never clearly ascertained my own inclinations upon that subject.”

“Well, you shall have ample opportunity to do so to-day. And oh! I promise you the sight of the loveliest face that you can picture to yourself when you think of your future wife.”

“My future wife, I hope, is not yet born,” said Kenelm, wearily, and with much effort suppressing a yawn. “But at all events, I will say till after two o’clock; for two o’clock, I presume, means luncheon.”

“Mrs. Braefield laughed.—“You retain your appetite?”

"Most single men do, provided they don't fall in love and become doubled up."

At this abominable attempt at a pun, Mrs. Braefield disdained to laugh; but turning away from its perpetrator she took off her hat and gloves and passed her hands lightly over her forehead, as if to smooth back some vagrant tress in locks already sufficiently sheen and trim. She was not quite so pretty in female attire as she had appeared in boy's dress, nor did she look quite as young. In all other respects she was wonderfully improved. There was a serener, a more settled intelligence in her frank bright eyes, a milder expression in the play of her parted lips. Kenelm gazed at her with pleased admiration. And as now, turning from the glass, she encountered his look, a deeper colour came into the clear delicacy of her cheeks, and the frank eyes moistened. She came up to him as he sat, and took his hand in both hers, pressing it warmly, "Ah, Mr. Chillingly," she said, with impulsive tremulous tones, "look round, look round this happy peaceful home!—the life so free from a care, the husband whom I so love and honour; all the blessings that I might have so recklessly lost for ever had I not met with you, had I been punished as I deserved. How often I thought of your words, that 'you would be proud of my friendship when we met again!' What strength they gave me in my hours of humbled self-reproach!" Her voice here died away as if in the effort to suppress a sob.

She released his hand, and before he could answer, passed quickly through the open sash into the garden.

CHAPTER IV.

THE children have come,—some thirty of them, pretty as English children generally are, happy in the joy of the summer sunshine, and the flower lawns, and the feast under cover of an awning suspended between chestnut-trees, and carpeted with sward.

No doubt Kenelm held his own at the banquet, and did his best to increase the general gaiety, for whenever he spoke the children listened eagerly, and when he had done they laughed mirthfully.

"The fair face I promised you," whispered Mrs. Braefield, "is not here yet. I have a little note from the young lady to say that Mrs. Cameron does not feel very well this morning, but hopes to recover sufficiently to come later in the afternoon."

"And pray who is Mrs. Cameron?"

"Ah! I forgot that you are a stranger to the place. Mrs. Cameron is the aunt with whom Lily resides. Is it not a pretty name, Lily?"

"Very! emblematic of a spinster that does not spin, with a white head and a thin stalk."

"Then the name belies my Lily, as you will see."

The children now finished their feast, and betook themselves to dancing in an alley smoothed for a croquet-ground, and to the sound of a violin played by the old grandfather of one of the party. While Mrs. Braefield was busying herself with forming the dance, Kenelm seized the occasion to escape from a young nymph of the age of twelve who had sat next him at the banquet, and taken so great a fancy to him that he began to fear she would vow never to forsake his side, and stole away undetected.

There are times when the mirth of others only saddens us, especially the mirth of children with high spirits, that jar on our own quiet mood. Gliding through a dense shrubbery, in which, though the lilacs were faded, the laburnum still retained here and there the waning gold of its clusters, Kenelm came into a recess which bounded his steps and invited him to repose. It was a circle, so formed artificially by slight trellises, to which clung parasite roses heavy with leaves and flowers. In the midst played a tiny fountain with a silvery murmuring sound; at the background, dominating the place, rose the crests of stately trees, on which the sunlight shimmered, but which rampired out all horizon beyond. Even as in life do the great dominant passions—love, ambition, desire of power, or gold, or fame, or knowledge—form the proud background to the

brieflived flowerets of our youth, lift our eyes beyond the smile of their bloom, catch the glint of a loftier sunbeam, and yet, and yet, exclude our sight from the lengths and the widths of the space which extends behind and beyond them.

Kenelm threw himself on the turf beside the fountain. From afar came the whoop and the laugh of the children in their sports or their dance. At the distance their joy did not sadden him—he marvelled why; and thus, in musing reverie, thought to explain the why to himself.

“The poet,” so ran his lazy thinking, “has told us that ‘distance lends enchantment to the view,’ and thus compares to the charm of distance the illusion of hope. But the poet narrows the scope of his own illustration. Distance lends enchantment to the ear as well as to the sight; nor to these bodily senses alone. Memory no less than hope owes its charm to ‘the far away.’

“I cannot imagine myself again a child when I am in the midst of yon noisy children. But as their noise reaches me here, subdued and mellowed, and knowing, thank Heaven, that the urchins are not within reach of me, I could readily dream myself back into childhood, and into sympathy with the lost playfields of school.

“So surely it must be with grief: how different the terrible agony for a beloved one just gone from earth, to the soft regret for one who disappeared into Heaven years ago! So with the art of poetry: how imperatively, when it deals with the great emotions of tragedy, it must remove the actors from us, in proportion as the emotions are to elevate, and the tragedy is to please us by the tears it draws! Imagine our shock if a poet were to place on the stage some wise gentleman with whom we dined yesterday, and who was discovered to have killed his father and married his mother. But when *Œdipus* commits those unhappy mistakes nobody is shocked. Oxford in the nineteenth century is a long way off from Thebes 3000 or 4000 years ago.

“And,” continued Kenelm, plunging deeper into the maze of metaphysical criticism, “even where the poet deals with persons and things close upon our daily sight—if he would give

them poetic charm he must resort to a sort of moral or psychological distance; the nearer they are to us in external circumstance, the farther they must be in some internal peculiarities. Werter and Clarissa Harlowe are described as contemporaries of their artistic creation, and with the minutest details of apparent realism; yet they are at once removed from our daily lives by their idiosyncrasies and their fates. We know that while Werter and Clarissa are so near to us in much that we sympathise with them as friends and kinsfolk, they are yet as much remote from us in the poetic and idealised side of their natures as if they belonged to the age of Homer; and this it is that invests with charm the very pain which their fate inflicts on us. Thus, I suppose, it must be in love. If the love we feel is to have the glamour of poetry, it must be love for some one morally at a distance from our ordinary habitual selves; in short, differing from us in attributes which, however near we draw to the possessor, we can never approach, never blend, in attributes of our own; so that there is something in the loved one that always remains an ideal—a mystery—‘a sun-bright summit mingling with the sky!’”

Herewith the soliloquist's musings slided vaguely into mere reverie. He closed his eyes drowsily, not asleep, nor yet quite awake; as sometimes in bright summer days when we recline on the grass we do close our eyes, and yet dimly recognise a golden light bathing the drowsy lids; and athwart that light images come and go like dreams, though we know that we are not dreaming.

CHAPTER V.

FROM this state, half comatose, half unconscious, Kenelm was roused slowly, reluctantly. Something struck softly on his cheek—again a little less softly; he opened his eyes—they fell first upon two tiny rosebuds, which, on striking his face, had fallen on his breast; and then looking up, he saw before

him, in an opening of the trellised circle, a female child's laughing face. Her hand was still uplifted charged with another rosebud, but behind the child's figure, looking over her shoulder and holding back the menacing arm, was a face as innocent but lovelier far—the face of a girl in her first youth, framed round with the blossoms that festooned the trellise. How the face became the flowers! It seemed the fairy spirit of them.

Kenelm started and rose to his feet. The child, the one whom he had so ungallantly escaped from ran towards him through a wicket in the circle. Her companion disappeared.

"Is it you?" said Kenelm to the child—"you who pelted me so cruelly? Ungrateful creature! Did I not give you the best strawberries in the dish and all my own cream?"

"But why did you run away and hide yourself when you ought to be dancing with me?" replied the young lady, evading, with the instinct of her sex, all answer to the reproach she had deserved.

"I did not run away, and it is clear that I did not mean to hide myself since you so easily found me out. But who was the young lady with you? I suspect she pelted me too, for *she* seems to have run away to hide herself."

"No, she did not pelt you; she wanted to stop me, and you would have had another rosebud—oh, so much bigger!—if she had not held back my arm. Don't you know her—don't you know Lily?"

"No; so that is Lily? You shall introduce me to her."

By this time they had passed out of the circle through the little wicket opposite the path by which Kenelm had entered, and opening at once on the lawn. Here at some distance the children were grouped, some reclined on the grass, some walking to and fro, in the interval of the dance.

In the space between the group and the trellise, Lily was walking alone and quickly. The child left Kenelm's side and ran after her friend, soon overtook, but did not succeed in arresting her steps. Lily did not pause till she had reached the grassy ballroom, and here all the children came round her and shut out her delicate form from Kenelm's sight.

Before he had reached the place, Mrs. Braefield met him.

"Lily is come!"

"I know it—I have seen her."

"Is not she beautiful?"

"I must see more of her if I am to answer critically, but before you introduce me, may I be permitted to ask who and what is Lily?"

Mrs. Braefield paused a moment before she answered, and yet the answer was brief enough not to need much consideration. "She is a Miss Mordaunt, an orphan; and, as I before told you, resides with her aunt, Mrs. Cameron, a widow. They have the prettiest cottage you ever saw on the banks of the river, or rather rivulet, about a mile from this place. Mrs. Cameron is a very good, simple-hearted woman. As to Lily, I can praise her beauty only with safe conscience, for as yet she is a mere child—her mind quite unformed."

"Did you ever meet any man, much less any woman, whose mind was formed?" muttered Kenelm. "I am sure mine is not, and never will be on this earth."

Mrs. Braefield did not hear this low-voiced observation. She was looking about for Lily; and perceiving her at last as the children who surrounded her were dispersing to renew the dance, she took Kenelm's arm, led him to the young lady, and a formal introduction took place.

Formal as it could be on those sunlit swards, amidst the joy of summer and the laugh of children. In such scene and such circumstance, formality does not last long. I know not how it was, but in a very few minutes Kenelm and Lily had ceased to be strangers to each other. They found themselves seated apart from the rest of the merry-makers, on the bank shadowed by lime-trees; the man listening with downcast eyes, the girl with mobile shifting glances now on earth, now on heaven, and talking freely, gaily—like the babble of a happy stream, with a silvery dulcet voice and a sparkle of rippling smiles.

No doubt this is a reversal of the formalities of well-bred life, and conventional narrating thereof. According to them, no doubt, it is for the man to talk and the maid to listen; but I state the facts as they were, honestly. And Lily knew no more of the formalities of drawing-room life than a skylark

fresh from its nest knows of the song-teacher and the cage. She was still so much of a child. Mrs. Braefield was right—her mind was still so unformed.

What she did talk about in that first talk between them that could make the meditative Kenelm listen so mutely, so intently, I know not, at least I could not jot it down on paper. I fear it was very egotistical, as the talk of children generally is—about herself and her aunt, and her home and her friends—all her friends seemed children like herself, though younger—Clemmy the chief of them. Clemmy was the one who had taken a fancy to Kenelm. And amidst all this ingenuous prattle there came flashes of a quick intellect, a lively fancy—nay, even a poetry of expression or of sentiment. It might be the talk of a child, but certainly not of a silly child. But as soon as the dance was over, the little ones again gathered round Lily. Evidently she was the prime favourite of them all; and as her companion had now become tired of dancing, new sports were proposed, and Lily was carried off to “Prisoner’s Base.”

“I am very happy to make your acquaintance, Mr. Chillingly,” said a frank, pleasant voice; and a well-dressed, good-looking man held out his hand to Kenelm.

“My husband,” said Mrs. Braefield, with a certain pride in her look.

Kenelm responded cordially to the civilities of the master of the house, who had just returned from his city office, and left all its cares behind him. You had only to look at him to see that he was prosperous, and deserved to be so. There were in his countenance the signs of strong sense, of good-humour—above all, of an active energetic temperament. A man of broad smooth forehead, keen hazel eyes, firm lips and jaw; with a happy contentment in himself, his house, the world in general, mantling over his genial smile, and outspoken in the metallic ring of his voice.

“You will stay and dine with us, of course,” said Mr. Braefield; “and unless you want very much to be in town to-night, I hope you will take a bed here.”

Kenelm hesitated.

"Do stay at least till to-morrow," said Mrs. Braefield. Kenelm hesitated still; and while hesitating his eye rested on Lily, leaning on the arm of a middle-aged lady, and approaching the hostess—evidently to take leave.

"I cannot resist so tempting an invitation," said Kenelm, and he fell back a little behind Lily and her companion.

"Thank you much for so pleasant a day," said Mrs. Cameron to the hostess. "Lily has enjoyed herself extremely. I only regret we could not come earlier."

"If you are walking home," said Mr. Braefield, "let me accompany you. I want to speak to your gardener about his heart's-ease—it is much finer than mine."

"If so," said Kenelm to Lily, "may I come too? Of all flowers that grow, heart's-ease is the one I most prize."

A few minutes afterwards Kenelm was walking by the side of Lily along the banks of a little stream, tributary to the Thames—Mrs. Cameron and Mr. Braefield in advance, for the path only held two abreast.

Suddenly Lily left his side, allured by a rare butterfly—I think it is called the Emperor of Morocco—that was sunning its yellow wings upon a group of wild reeds. She succeeded in capturing this wanderer in her straw hat, over which she drew her sun-veil. After this notable capture she returned demurely to Kenelm's side.

"Do you collect insects?" said that philosopher, as much surprised as it was his nature to be at anything.

"Only butterflies," answered Lily; "they are not insects, you know; they are souls."

"Emblems of souls you mean—at least, so the Greeks prettily represented them to be."

"No, real souls-- the souls of infants that die in their cradles unbaptized; and if they are taken care of, and not eaten by birds, and live a year then they pass into fairies."

"It is a very poetical idea, Miss Mordaunt, and founded on evidence quite as rational as other assertions of the metamorphosis of one creature into another. Perhaps you can do what the philosophers cannot—tell me how you learned a new idea to be an incontestable fact?"

"I don't know," replied Lily, looking very much puzzled; "perhaps I learned it in a book, or perhaps I dreamed it."

"You could not make a wiser answer if you were a philosopher. But you talk of taking care of butterflies; how do you do that? Do you impale them on pins stuck into a glass case?"

"Impale them! How can you talk so cruelly? You deserve to be pinched by the fairies."

"I am afraid," thought Kenelm, compassionately, "that my companion has no mind to be formed; what is euphoniously called 'an innocent.'"

He shook his head and remained silent.

Lily resumed—

"I will show you my collection when we get home.—they seem so happy. I am sure there are some of them who know me—they will feed from my hand. I have only had one die since I began to collect them last summer."

"Then you have kept them a year; they ought to have turned into fairies."

"I suppose many of them have. Of course I let out all those that had been with me twelve months—they don't turn to fairies in the cage, you know. Now I have only those I caught this year, or last autumn; the prettiest don't appear till the autumn."

The girl here bent her uncovered head over the straw hat, her tresses shadowing it, and uttered loving words to the prisoner. Then again she looked up and around her, and abruptly stopped, and exclaimed—

'How can people live in towns—how can people say they are ever dull in the country? Look," she continued, gravely and earnestly—"look at that tall pine-tree, with its long branch sweeping over the water; see how, as the breeze catches it, it changes its shadow, and how the shadow changes the play of the sunlight on the brook:—

"Wave your tops, ye pines;
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.'

What an interchange of music there must be between Nature and a poet!"

Kenelm was startled. This "an innocent"!—this a girl who had no mind to be formed! In that presence he could not be cynical; could not speak of Nature as a mechanism, a lying humbug; as he had done to the man poet. He replied gravely—

"The Creator has gifted the whole universe with language, but few are the hearts that can interpret it. Happy those to whom it is no foreign tongue, acquired imperfectly with care and pain, but rather a native language, learned unconsciously from the lips of the great mother. To them the butterfly's wing may well buoy into heaven a fairy's soul!"

When he had thus said Lily turned, and for the first time attentively looked into his dark soft eyes; then instinctively she laid her light hand on his arm, and said in a low voice, "Talk on—talk thus; I like to hear you."

But Kenelm did not talk on. They had now arrived at the garden-gate of Mrs. Cameron's cottage, and the elder persons in advance paused at the gate and walked with them to the house.

It was a long, low, irregular cottage, without pretension to architectural beauty, yet exceedingly picturesque—a flower-garden, large, but in proportion to the house, with parterres in which the colours were exquisitely assorted, sloping to the grassy margin of the rivulet, where the stream expanded into a lake-like basin, narrowed at either end by locks, from which with gentle sound flowed shallow waterfalls. By the banks was a rustic seat, half overshadowed by the drooping boughs of a vast willow.

The inside of the house was in harmony with the exterior—cottage-like, but with an unmistakable air of refinement about the rooms, even in the little entrance-hall, which was painted in Pompeian frescoes.

"Come and see my butterfly-cage," said Lily, whisperingly.

Kenelm followed her through the window that opened on the garden; and at one end of a small conservatory, or rather, greenhouse, was the habitation of these singular favourites. It was as large as a small room; three sides of it formed by minute wirework, with occasional draperies of muslin or other

slight material, and covered at intervals, sometimes within sometimes without, by dainty creepers; a tiny cistern in the centre, from which upsprang a sparkling jet. Lily cautiously lifted a sash-door and glided in, closing it behind her. Her entrance set in movement a multitude of gossamer wings some fluttering round her, some more boldly settling on her hair or dress. Kenelm thought she had not vainly boasted when she said that some of the creatures had learned to know her. She released the Emperor of Morocco from her hat; it circled round her fearlessly, and then vanished amidst the leaves of the creepers. Lily opened the door and came out.

"I have heard of a philosopher who tamed a wasp," said Kenelm, "but never before of a young lady who tamed butterflies."

"No," said Lily, proudly; "I believe I am the first who attempted it. I don't think I should have attempted it if I had been told that others had succeeded before me. Not that I have succeeded quite. No matter; if they don't love me, I love them."

They re-entered the drawing-room, and Mrs. Cameron addressed Kenelm.

"Do you know much of this part of the country, Mr Chillingly?"

"It is quite new to me, and more rural than many districts further from London."

"That is the good fortune of most of our home counties," said Mr. Braefield; "they escape the smoke and din of manufacturing towns, and agricultural science has not demolished their leafy hedgerows. The walks through our green lanes are as much bordered with convolvulus and honeysuckle as they were when Izaak Walton sauntered through them to angle in that stream!"

'Does tradition say that he angled in that stream? I thought his haunts were rather on the other side of London.'

"Possibly; I am not learned in Walton or in his art, but there is an old summer-house, on the other side of the lock yonder, on which is carved the name of Izaak Walton, but whether by his

own hand or another's who shall say? Has Mr. Melville been here lately, Mrs. Cameron?"

"No, not for several months."

"He has had a glorious success this year. We may hope that at last his genius is acknowledged by the world. I meant to buy his picture, but I was not in time—a Manchester man was before me."

"Who is Mr. Melville? any relation to you?" whispered Kenelm to Lily.

"Relation—I scarcely know. Yes, I suppose so, because he is my guardian. But if he were the nearest relation on earth, I could not love him more," said Lily, with impulsive eagerness, her cheeks flushing, her eyes filling with tears.

"And he is an artist—a painter?" asked Kenelm.

"Oh yes; no one paints such beautiful pictures—no one so clever, no one so kind."

Kenelm strove to recollect if he had ever heard the name of Melville as a painter, but in vain. Kenelm, however, knew but little of painters—they were not in his way; and he owned to himself, very humbly, that there might be many a living painter of eminent renown whose name and works would be strange to him.

He glanced round the wall,—Lily interpreted his look. "There are no pictures of his here," said she; "there is one in my own room. I will show it you when you come again."

"And now," said Mr. Braefield, rising, "I must just have a word with your gardener, and then go home. We dine earlier here than in London Mr. Chillingly."

As the two gentlemen, after taking leave, re-entered the hall, Lily followed them and said to Kenelm, "What time will you come to-morrow to see the picture?"

Kenelm averted his head, and then replied, not with his wonted courtesy, but briefly and brusquely—

"I fear I cannot call to-morrow. I shall be far away by sunrise."

Lily made no answer, but turned back into the room.

Mr. Braefield found the gardener watering a flower-border, conferred with him about the heart's-ease, and then joined

Kenelm, who had halted a few yards beyond the garden-gate.

"A pretty little place that," said Mr. Braefield, with a sort of lordly compassion, as became the owner of Braefieldville. "What I call quaint."

"Yes, quaint," echoed Kenelm, abstractedly.

"It is always the case with houses enlarged by degrees. I have heard my poor mother say that when Melville or Mrs. Cameron first bought it, it was little better than a mere labourer's cottage, with a field attached to it. And two or three years afterwards a room or so more was built, and a bit of the field taken in for a garden; and then by degrees the whole part now inhabited by the family was built, leaving only the old cottage as a scullery and washhouse; and the whole field was turned into the garden, as you see. But whether it was Melville's money or the aunt's that did it, I don't know. More likely the aunt's. I don't see what interest Melville has in the place; he does not go there often, I fancy—it is not his home."

"Mr. Melville, it seems, is a painter, and, from what I heard you say, a successful one."

"I fancy he had little success before this year. But surely you saw his pictures at the Exhibition?"

"I am ashamed to say I have not been to the Exhibition."

"You surprise me. However, Melville had three pictures there—all very good; but the one I wished to buy made much more sensation than the others, and has suddenly lifted him from obscurity into fame."

"He appears to be a relation of Miss Mordaunt's but so distant a one, that she could not even tell me what grade of cousinship he could claim."

"Nor can I. He is her guardian, I know. The relationship, if any, must, as you say, be very distant; for Melville is of humble extraction, while any one can see that Mrs. Cameron is a thorough gentlewoman, and Lily Mordaunt is her sister's child. I have heard my mother say that it was Melville, then a very young man, who bought the cottage, perhaps with Mrs. Cameron's money; saying it was for a widowed lady, whose

husband had left her with very small means. And when Mrs. Cameron arrived with Lily, then a mere infant, she was in deep mourning, and a very young woman herself—pretty, too. If Melville had been a frequent visitor then, of course there would have been scandal; but he very seldom came, and when he did, he lodged in a cottage, Cromwell Lodge, on the other side of the brook; now and then bringing with him a fellow-lodger—some other young artist, I suppose, for the sake of angling. So there could be no cause for scandal, and nothing can be more blameless than poor Mrs. Cameron's life. My mother, who then resided at Braefieldville, took a great fancy to both Lily and her aunt, and when by degrees the cottage grew into a genteel sort of place, the few gentry in the neighbourhood followed my mother's example and were very kind to Mrs. Cameron, so that she has now her place in the society about here, and is much liked."

"And Mr. Melville?—does he still very seldom come here?"

"To say truth, he has not been at all since I settled at Braefieldville. The place was left to my mother for her life, and I was not much there during her occupation. In fact, I was then a junior partner in our firm, and conducted the branch business in New York, coming over to England for my holiday once a year or so. When my mother died, there was much to arrange before I could settle personally in England, and I did not come to settle at Braefieldville till I married. I did see Melville on one of my visits to the place some years ago; but, between ourselves, he is not the sort of person whose intimate acquaintance one would wish to court. My mother told me he was an idle, dissipated man, and I have heard from others that he was very unsteady. Mr. —, the great painter, told me that he was a loose fish; and I suppose his habits were against his getting on, till this year, when, perhaps by a lucky accident, he has painted a picture that raises him to the top of the tree. But is not Miss Lily wondrously nice to look at? What a pity her education has been so much neglected!"

"Has it?"

"Have not you discovered that already? She has not had

even a music-master, though my wife says she has a good ear, and can sing prettily enough. As for reading I don't think she has read anything but fairy tales and poetry, and such silly stuff. However, she is very young yet; and now that her guardian can sell his pictures, it is to be hoped that he will do more justice to his ward. Painters and actors are not so regular in their private lives as we plain men are, and great allowance is to be made for them; still, every one is bound to do his duty. I am sure you agree with me?"

"Certainly," said Kenelm, with an emphasis which startled the merchant. "That is an admirable maxim of yours: it seem a commonplace, yet how often, when it is put into our heads, it strikes as a novelty! A duty may be a very difficult thing, a very disagreeable thing, and, what is strange, it is often a very invisible thing. It is present—close before us, and yet we don't see it; somebody shouts its name in our ears, 'Duty,' and straight it towers before us a grim giant. Pardon me if I leave you—I can't stay to dine. Duty summons me elsewhere. Make my excuses to Mrs. Braefield."

Before Mr. Braefield could recover his self-possession, Kenelm had vaulted over a stile and was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

KENELM walked into the shop kept by the Somerses, and found Jessie still at the counter. "Give me back my knapsack. Thank you," he said, flinging the knapsack across his shoulders. "Now, do me a favour. A portmanteau of mine ought to be at the station. Send for it, and keep it till I give further directions. I think of going to Oxford for a day or two. Mrs. Somers, one more word with you. Think, answer frankly, are you, as you said this morning, thoroughly happy, and yet married to the man you loved?"

"Oh, so happy!"

"And wish for nothing beyond? Do not wish Will to be other than he is?"

"God forbid! You frighten me, sir."

"Frighten you! Be it so. Every one who is happy should be frightened, lest happiness fly away. Do your best to chain it, and you will, for you attach Duty to Happiness; and," muttered Kenelm, as he turned from the shop, "Duty is sometimes not a rose-coloured tie, but a heavy iron-hued clog."

He strode on through the street towards the sign-post with "To Oxford" inscribed thereon. And whether he spoke literally of the knapsack, or metaphorically of duty, he murmured, as he strode—

"A pedlar's pack that bows the bearer down."

CHAPTER VII.

KENELM might have reached Oxford that night, for he was a rapid and untirable pedestrian; but he halted a little after the moon rose, and laid himself down to rest beneath a new-mown haystack, not very far from the high road.

He did not sleep. Meditatingly propped on his elbow, he said to himself—

"It is long since I have wondered at nothing. I wonder now: can this be love—really love—unmistakably love? Pooh! it is impossible; the very last person in the world to be in love with. Let us reason upon it—you, myself, and I. To begin with—face! What is face? In a few years the most beautiful face may be very plain. Take the Venus at Florence. Animate her; see her ten years after; a chignon, front teeth (blue or artificially white), mottled complexion, double chin—all that sort of plump prettiness goes into double chin. Face, bah! What man of sense—what pupil of Welby, the realist—can fall in love with a face? and even if I were simpleton enough to do so, pretty faces are as common as daisies. Cecilia Travers has more regular features; Jessie Wiles a richer colouring. I was not in love with them—not a bit of it. Myself, you have nothing to say there. Well, then, mind?

Talk of mind, indeed ! a creature whose favourite companionship is that of butterflies, and who tells me that butterflies are the souls of infants unbaptized. What an article for *The Londoner*, on the culture of young women ! What a girl for Miss Garrett and Miss Emily Faithfull ! Put aside Mind as we have done Face. What rests ?—the Frenchman's ideal of happy marriage ? congenial circumstance of birth, fortune, tastes, habits. Worse still. Myself, answer honestly, are you not floored ?”

Whereon “Myself” took up the parable and answered—“O thou fool ! why wert thou so ineffably blest in one presence ? Why, in quitting that presence, did Duty become so grim ? Why dost thou address to me those inept pedantic questionings, under the light of yon moon, which has suddenly ceased to be to thy thoughts an astronomical body and has become, for ever and for ever, identified in thy heart's dreams with romance and poesy and first love ? Why, instead of gazing on that uncomfortable orb, art thou not quickening thy steps towards a cozy inn and a good supper at Oxford ? Kenelm, my friend, thou art in for it. No disguising the fact—thou art in love !”

“I'll be hanged if I am,” said the Second in the Dualism of Kenelm's mind ; and therewith he shifted his knapsack into a pillow, turned his eyes from the moon, and still could not sleep. The face of Lily still haunted his eyes—the voice of Lily still rang in his ears.

Oh, my reader ! dost thou here ask me to tell thee what Lily was like ?—was she dark, was she fair, was she tall, was she short ? Never shalt thou learn these secrets from me. Imagine to thyself the being to which thine whole of life, body and mind and soul, moved irresistibly as the needle to the pole. Let her be tall or short, dark or fair, she is that which out of all womankind has suddenly become the one woman for thee. Fortunate art thou, my reader, if thou chance to have heard the popular song of “My Queen” sung by the one lady who alone can sing it with expression worthy the verse of the poetess and the music of the composition, by the sister of the exquisite songstress. But if thou hast not heard the verse thus sung, to an accompaniment thus composed, still the words themselves are, or ought to be, familiar to thee, if thou art,

as I take for granted, a lover of the true lyrical muse. Recall then the words supposed to be uttered by him who knows himself destined to do homage to one he has not yet beheld :—

“ She is standing somewhere—she I shall honour,
 She that I wait for, my queen, my queen ;
 Whether her hair be golden or raven,
 Whether her eyes be hazel or blue,
 I know not now, it will be engraven
 Some day hence as my loveliest hue.
 She may be humble or proud, my lady,
 Or that sweet calm which is just between ;
 But whenever she comes, she will find me ready
 To do her homage, my queen, my queen.”

Was it possible that the cruel boy-god “who sharpens his arrows on the whetstone of the human heart” had found the moment to avenge himself for the neglect of his altars and the scorn of his power? Must that redoubted knight-errant, the hero of this tale, despite the Three Fishes on his charmed shield, at last veil the crest and bow the knee, and murmur to himself, “She has come, my queen”?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next morning Kenelm arrived at Oxford—“*Verum secretumque Mouseion.*”

If there be a place in this busy island which may distract the passion of youth from love to scholarship, to Ritualism, to mediæval associations, to that sort of poetical sentiment or poetical fanaticism which a Mivers and a Welby and an advocate of the Realistic School would hold in contempt—certainly that place is Oxford. Home, nevertheless, of great thinkers and great actors in the practical world.

The vacation had not yet commenced, but the commencement was near at hand. Kenelm thought he could recognise the leading men by their slower walk and more abstracted expression of countenance. Among the fellows was the eminent author of that book which had so powerfully fascinated the earlier adolescence of Kenelm Chillingly, and who had

himself been subject to the fascination of a yet stronger spirit. The Rev. Decimus Roach had been ever an intense and reverent admirer of John Henry Newman—an admirer, I mean, of the pure and lofty character of the man, quite apart from sympathy with his doctrines. But although Roach remained an unconverted Protestant of orthodox, if High Church, creed, yet there was one tenet he did hold in common with the author of the *Apologia*. He ranked celibacy among the virtues most dear to Heaven. In that eloquent treatise, *The Approach to the Angels* he not only maintained that the state of single blessedness was strictly incumbent on every member of a Christian priesthood, but to be commended to the adoption of every conscientious layman.

It was the desire to confer with this eminent theologian that had induced Kenelm to direct his steps to Oxford.

Mr. Roach was a friend of Welby's, at whose house, when a pupil, Kenelm had once or twice met him, and been even more charmed by his conversation than by his treatise. Kenelm called on Mr. Roach, who received him very graciously, and not being a tutor or examiner, placed his time at Kenelm's disposal; took him the round of the colleges and the Bodleian; invited him to dine in his college-hall; and after dinner led him into his own rooms, and gave him an excellent bottle of Château Margeaux.

Mr. Roach was somewhere about fifty—a good-looking man and evidently thought himself so, for he wore his hair long behind and parted in the middle; which is not done by men who form modest estimates of their personal appearance.

Kenelm was not long in drawing out his host on the subject to which that profound thinker had devoted so much meditation.

"I can scarcely convey to you," said Kenelm, "the intense admiration with which I have studied your noble work, *Approach to the Angels*. It produced a great effect on me in the age between boyhood and youth. But of late some doubts on the universal application of your doctrine have crept into my mind."

"Ay, indeed?" said Mr. Roach, with an expression of interest in his face.

"And I come to you for their solution."

Mr. Roach turned away his head, and pushed the bottle to Kenelm.

"I am quite willing to concede," resumed the heir of the Chillinglys, "that a priesthood should stand apart from the distracting cares of a family, and pure from all carnal affections."

"Hem, hem," grunted Mr. Roach, taking his knee on his lap and caressing it.

"I go farther," continued Kenelm, "and supposing with you that the Confessional has all the importance, whether in its monitory or its cheering effects upon repentant sinners, which is attached to it by the Roman Catholics, and that it ought to be no less cultivated by the Reformed Church, it seems to me essential that the Confessor should have no better half to whom it can be even suspected he may, in an unguarded moment, hint at the frailties of one of her female acquaintances."

"I pushed that argument too far," murmured Roach.

"Not a bit of it. Celibacy in the Confessor stands or falls with the Confessional. Your argument there is as sound as a bell. But when it comes to the layman, I think I detect a difference."

Mr. Roach shook his head, and replied stoutly, "No; if celibacy be incumbent on the one, it is equally incumbent on the other. I say 'if.'"

"Permit me to deny that assertion. Do not fear that I shall insult your understanding by the popular platitude—viz., that if celibacy were universal, in a very few years the human race would be extinct. As you have justly observed, in answer to that fallacy, 'It is the duty of each human soul to strive towards the highest perfection of the spiritual state for itself, and leave the fate of the human race to the care of the Creator.' If celibacy be necessary to spiritual perfection, how do we know but that it may be the purpose and decree of the All Wise that the human race, having attained to that perfection, should disappear from earth? Universal celibacy would thus be the euthanasia of mankind. On the other hand, if the Creator decided that the human race, having culminated to this crown-

ing but barren flower of perfection, should nevertheless continue to increase and multiply upon earth, have you not victoriously exclaimed, 'Presumptuous mortal! how canst thou presume to limit the resources of the Almighty? Would it not be easy for Him to continue some other mode, unexposed to trouble and sin and passion, as in the nuptials of the vegetable world, by which the generations will be renewed? Can we suppose that the angels—the immortal companies of Heaven—are not hourly increasing in number, and extending their population throughout infinity? and yet in Heaven there is no marrying nor giving in marriage.'—All this, clothed by you in words which my memory only serves me to quote imperfectly—all this I unhesitatingly concede."

Mr. Roach rose and brought another bottle of the Château Margeaux from his cellaret, filled Kenelm's glass, reseated himself, and took the other knee into his lap to caress.

"But," resumed Kenelm, "my doubt is this."

"Ah!" cried Mr. Roach, "let us hear the doubt."

"In the first place, is celibacy essential to the highest state of spiritual perfection? and, in the second place, if it were, are mortals, as at present constituted, capable of that culmination?"

"Very well put," said Mr. Roach, and he tossed off his glass with more cheerful aspect than he had hitherto exhibited.

"You see," said Kenelm, "we are compelled in this, as in other questions of philosophy, to resort to the inductive process, and draw our theories from the facts within our cognisance. Now looking round the world, is it the fact that old maids and old bachelors are so much more spiritually advanced than married folks? Do they pass their time, like an Indian dervish in serene contemplation of divine excellence and beatitude? Are they not quite as worldly in their own way as persons who have been married as often as the Wife of Bath, and generally speaking, more selfish, more frivolous, and more spiteful? I am sure I don't wish to speak uncharitably against old maids and old bachelors. I have three aunts who are old maids, and fine specimens of the genus; but I am sure they would all three have been more agreeable companions, and quite as spiritually gifted,

if they had been happily married, and were caressing their children, instead of lapdogs. So, too, I have an old bachelor-cousin, Chillingly Mivers, whom you know. As clever as a man can be. But, Lord bless you! as to being wrapt in spiritual meditation, he could not be more devoted to the things of earth if he had married as many wives as Solomon, and had as many children as Priam. Finally, have not half the mistakes in the world arisen from a separation between the spiritual and the moral nature of man? Is it not, after all, through his dealings with his fellow-men that man makes his safest 'approach to the angels'? And is not the moral system a very muscular system? Does it not require for healthful vigour plenty of continued exercise, and does it not get that exercise naturally by the relationships of family, with all the wider collateral struggles with life which the care of family necessitates?

"I put these questions to you with the humblest diffidence. I expect to hear such answers as will thoroughly convince my reason, and I shall be delighted if so. For at the root of the controversy lies the passion of love. And love must be a very disquieting, troublesome emotion, and has led many heroes and sages into wonderful weaknesses and follies."

"Gently, gently, Mr. Chillingly; don't exaggerate. Love, no doubt, is—ahem—a disquieting passion. Still, every emotion that changes life from a stagnant pool into the freshness and play of a running stream is disquieting to the pool. Not only love and its fellow-passions—such as ambition—but the exercise of the reasoning faculty, which is always at work in changing our ideas, is very disquieting. Love, Mr. Chillingly, has its good side as well as its bad. Pass the bottle."

KENELM (passing the bottle).—"Yes, yes; you are quite right in putting the adversary's case strongly, before you demolish it—all good rhetoricians do that. Pardon me if I am up to that trick in argument. Assume that I know all that can be said in favour of the abnegation of common sense, euphoniously called 'love,' and proceed to the demolition of the case."

THE REV. DECIMUS ROACH (hesitatingly).—"The demolition of the case? humph! The passions are ingrafted in the human system as part and parcel of it, and are not to be demolished so

easily as you seem to think. Love, taken rationally and morally by a man of good education and sound principles, is—is——”

KENELM—“Well, is what?”

THE REV. DECIMUS ROACH.—“A—a—a—thing not to be despised. Like the sun, it is the great colourist of life, Mr. Chillingly. And you are so right—the moral system does require daily exercise. What can give that exercise to a solitary man, when he arrives at the practical age in which he cannot sit for six hours at a stretch musing on the divine essence; and rheumatism or other ailments forbid his adventure into the wilds of Africa as a missionary? At that age, Nature, which will be heard, Mr. Chillingly, demands her rights. A sympathising female companion by one's side; innocent little children climbing one's knee, — lovely, bewitching picture! Who can be Goth enough to rub it out, who fanatic enough to paint over it the image of a St. Simeon sitting alone on a pillar? Take another glass. You don't drink enough, Mr. Chillingly.”

“I have drunk enough,” replied Kenelm, in a sullen voice, “to think I see double. I imagined that before me sat the austere adversary of the insanity of love and the miseries of wedlock. Now, I fancy I listen to a puling sentimentalist uttering the platitudes which the other Decimus Roach had already refuted. Certainly either I see double, or you amuse yourself with mocking my appeal to your wisdom.”

“Not so, Mr. Chillingly. But the fact is, that when I wrote that book of which you speak I was young, and youth is enthusiastic and one-sided. Now, with the same disdain of the excesses to which love may hurry weak intellects, I recognise its benignant effects when taken, as I before said, rationally—taken rationally, my young friend. At that period of life when the judgment is matured, the soothing companionship of an amiable female cannot but cheer the mind, and prevent that morose hoar-frost into which solitude is chilled and made rigid by increasing years. In short, Mr. Chillingly, having convinced myself that I erred in the opinion once too rashly put forth, I owe it to Truth, I owe it to Mankind, to make my conversion known to the world. And I am about next month to enter into the matrimonial state with a young lady who——”

"Say no more, say no more, Mr. Roach. It must be a painful subject to you. Let us drop it."

"It is not a painful subject at all!" exclaimed Mr. Roach, with warmth. "I look forward to the fulfilment of my duty with the pleasure which a well-trained mind always ought to feel in recanting a fallacious doctrine. But you do me the justice to understand that of course I do not take this step I propose — for my personal satisfaction. No, sir, it is the value of my example to others, which purifies my motives and animates my soul."

After this concluding and noble sentence, the conversation drooped. Host and guest both felt they had had enough of each other. Kenelm soon rose to depart.

Mr. Roach, on taking leave of him at the door, said, with marked emphasis—

"Not for my personal satisfaction—remember that. Whenever you hear my conversion discussed in the world, say that from my own lips you heard these words — NOT FOR MY PERSONAL SATISFACTION. No! my kind regards to Welby—a married man himself, and a father; *he* will understand me."

CHAPTER IX.

ON quitting Oxford, Kenelm wandered for several days about the country, advancing to no definite goal, meeting with no noticeable adventure. At last he found himself mechanically retracing his steps. A magnetic influence he could not resist drew him back towards the grassy meads and the sparkling rill of Moleswich.

"There must be," said he to himself, "a mental, like an optical, illusion. In the last, we fancy we have seen a spectre. If we dare not face the apparition—dare not attempt to touch it—run superstitiously away from it—what happens? We shall believe to our dying day that it was not an illusion, that it was a spectre—and so we may be crazed for life. But if we manfully walk up to the phantom, stretch our hands to seize

it, oh ! it fades into thin air, the cheat of our eyesight is dispelled, and we shall never be ghost-ridden again. So it must be with this mental illusion of mine. I see an image strange to my experience—it seems to me, at first sight, clothed with a supernatural charm ; like an unreasoning coward, I run away from it. It continues to haunt me ; I cannot shut out its apparition. It pursues me by day alike in the haunts of men—alike in the solitudes of nature ; it visits me by night in my dreams. I begin to say this must be a real visitant from another world—it must be love—the love of which I read in the Poets, as in the Poets I read of witchcraft and ghosts. Surely I must approach that apparition as a philosopher like Sir David Brewster would approach the black cat seated on a hearth-rug, which he tells us that some lady of his acquaintance constantly saw till she went into a world into which black cats are not held to be admitted. The more I think of it the less it appears to me possible that I can be really in love with a wild, half-educated, anomalous creature, merely because the apparition of her face haunts me. With perfect safety, therefore, I can approach the creature ; in proportion as I see more of her the illusion will vanish. I will go back to Moleswich manfully.”

Thus said Kenelm to himself, and himself answered—

“Go ; for thou canst not help it. Thinkest thou that Daces can escape the net that has meshed a Roach ? No—

“‘Come it will, the day decreed by fate,’

when thou must succumb to the ‘nature which will be heard.’ Better succumb now, and with a good grace, than resist till thou hast reached thy fiftieth year, and then make a rational choice not for thy personal satisfaction.”

Whereupon Kenelm answered to himself, indignantly, “Pooh ! thou flippant. My *alter ego*, thou knowest not what thou art talking about ! It is not a question of nature ; it is a question of the supernatural—an illusion—a phantom !”

Thus Kenelm and himself continued to quarrel with each other ; and the more they quarrelled, the nearer they approached to the haunted spot in which had been seen, and fled from, the fatal apparition of first love.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

SIR PETER had not heard from Kenelm since a letter informing him that his son had left town on an excursion, which would probably be short, though it might last a few weeks; and the good Baronet now resolved to go to London himself, take his chance of Kenelm's return, and if still absent, at least learn from Mivers and others how far that very eccentric planet had contrived to steer a regular course amidst the fixed stars of the metropolitan system. He had other reasons for his journey. He wished to make the acquaintance of Gordon Chillingly before handing him over the 20,000*l.* which Kenelm had released in that resettlement of estates, the necessary deeds of which the young heir had signed before quitting London for Moleswich. Sir Peter wished still more to see Cecilia Travers, in whom Kenelm's accounts of her had inspired a very strong interest.

The day after his arrival in town Sir Peter breakfasted with Mivers.

"Upon my word you are very comfortable here," said Sir Peter, glancing at the well-appointed table, and round the well-furnished rooms.

"Naturally so — there is no one to prevent my being comfortable. I am not married :—taste that omelette."

"Some men declare they never knew comfort till they were married, Cousin Mivers."

"Some men are reflecting bodies, and catch a pallid gleam

from the comfort which a wife concentrates on herself. With a fortune so modest and secure, what comforts, possessed by me now, would not a Mrs. Chillingly Mivers ravish from my hold and appropriate to herself! Instead of these pleasant rooms, where should I be lodged? In a dingy den looking on a backyard excluded from the sun by day and vocal with cats by night; while Mrs. Mivers luxuriated in two drawing-rooms with southern aspect and perhaps a boudoir. My brougham would be torn from my uses and monopolised by 'the angel of my hearth,' clouded in her crinoline and halved by her chignon. No! if ever I marry—and I never deprive myself of the civilities and needlework which single ladies waste upon me by saying I shall not marry—it will be when women have fully established their rights; for then men may have a chance of vindicating their own. Then if there are two drawing-rooms in the house I shall take one; if not, we will toss up who shall have the back parlour; if we keep a brougham, it will be exclusively mine three days in the week; if Mrs. M. wants 200*l.* a year for her wardrobe she must be contented with one, the other half will belong to my personal decoration; if I am oppressed by proof-sheets and printers' devils, half of the oppression falls to her lot, while I take my holiday on the croquet ground at Wimbledon. Yes, when the present wrongs of women are exchanged for equality with men—I will cheerfully marry; and to do the thing generous, I will not oppose Mrs. M.'s voting in the vestry or for Parliament. I will give her my own votes with pleasure."

"I fear, my dear cousin, that you have infected Kenelm with your selfish ideas on the nuptial state. He does not seem inclined to marry—eh?"

"Not that I know of."

"What sort of girl is Cecilia Travers?"

"One of those superior girls who are not likely to tower into that terrible giantess called a 'superior woman.' A handsome, well-educated, sensible young lady. Not spoilt by being an heiress—in fine, just the sort of girl whom you could desire to fix on for a daughter-in-law."

"And you don't think Kenelm has a fancy for her?"

"Honestly speaking—I do not."

"Any counter-attraction? There are some things in which sons do not confide in their fathers. You have never heard that Kenelm has been a little wild?"

"Wild he is, as the noble savage who ran in the woods," said Cousin Mivers.

"You frighten me!"

"Before the noble savage ran across the squaws, and was wise enough to run away from them. Kenelm has run away now somewhere."

"Yes, he does not tell me where, nor do they know at his lodgings. A heap of notes on his table and no directions where they are to be forwarded. On the whole, however, he has held his own in London society—eh?"

"Certainly! he has been more courted than most young men, and perhaps more talked of. Oddities generally are."

"You own he has talents above the average? Do you not think he will make a figure in the world some day, and discharge that debt to the literary stores or the political interests of his country, which alas, I and my predecessors, the other Sir Peters, failed to do; and for which I hailed his birth, and gave him the name of Kenelm?"

"Upon my word," answered Mivers—who had now finished his breakfast, retreated to an easy-chair, and taken from the chimneypiece one of his famous trabucos,—“upon my word, I can't guess; if some great reverse of fortune befell him, and he had to work for his livelihood, or if some other direful calamity gave a shock to his nervous system and jolted it into a fussy, fidgety direction, I dare say he might make a splash in that current of life which bears men on to the grave. But you see he wants, as he himself very truly says, the two stimulants to definite action—poverty and vanity."

"Surely there have been great men who were neither poor nor vain?"

"I doubt it. But vanity is a ruling motive that takes many forms and many aliases—call it ambition, call it love of fame, still its substance is the same—the desire of applause carried into fussiness of action."

"There may be the desire for abstract truth without care for applause."

"Certainly. A philosopher on a desert island may amuse himself by meditating on the distinction between light and heat. But if on returning to the world, he publish the result of his meditations, vanity steps in, and desires to be applauded."

"Nonsense, Cousin Mivers, he may rather desire to be of use and benefit to mankind. You don't deny that there is such a thing as philanthropy."

"I don't deny that there is such a thing as humbug. And whenever I meet a man who has the face to tell me that he is taking a great deal of trouble, and putting himself very much out of his way, for a philanthropical object, without the slightest idea of reward either in praise or pence, I know that I have a humbug before me—a dangerous humbug—a swindling humbug—a fellow with his pocket full of villainous prospectuses and appeals to subscribers."

"Pooh, pooh; leave off that affectation of cynicism; you are not a bad-hearted fellow—you must love mankind—you must have an interest in the welfare of posterity."

"Love mankind? Interest in posterity? Bless my soul, Cousin Peter, I hope you have no prospectuses in *your* pockets; no schemes for draining the Pontine Marshes out of pure love to mankind; no propositions for doubling the income-tax, as a reserve fund for posterity, should our coalfields fail three thousand years hence. Love of mankind! Rubbish! This comes of living in the country."

"But you do love the human race—you do care for the generations that are to come."

"I! Not a bit of it. On the contrary, I rather dislike the human race, taking it altogether, and including the Australian bushmen; and I don't believe any man who tells me that he would grieve half as much if ten millions of human beings were swallowed up by an earthquake at a considerable distance from his own residence, say Abyssinia, as he would for a rise in his butcher's bills. As to posterity, who would consent to have a month's fit of the gout or tic-douloureux in order that in

the fourth thousand year, A.D., posterity should enjoy a perfect system of sewage?"

Sir Peter, who had recently been afflicted by a very sharp attack of neuralgia, shook his head, but was too conscientious not to keep silence.

"To turn the subject," said Mivers, relighting the cigar which he had laid aside while delivering himself of his amiable opinions, "I think you would do well, while in town, to call on your old friend Travers, and be introduced to Cecilia. If you think as favourably of her as I do, why not ask father and daughter to pay you a visit at Exmundham? Girls think more about a man when they see the place which he can offer to them as a home, and Exmundham is an attractive place to girls—picturesque and romantic."

"A very good idea," cried Sir Peter, heartily. "And I want also to make the acquaintance of Chillingly Gordon. Give me his address."

"Here is his card on the chimneypiece, take it; you will always find him at home till two o'clock. He is too sensible to waste the forenoon in riding out in Hyde Park with young ladies."

"Give me your frank opinion of that young kinsman. Kenelm tells me that he is clever and ambitious."

"Kenelm speaks truly. He is not a man who will talk stuff about love of mankind and posterity. He is of our day, with large, keen, wide-awake eyes, that look only on such portions of mankind as can be of use to him—and do not spoil their sight by poring through cracked telescopes, to catch a glimpse of posterity. Gordon is a man to be a Chancellor of the Exchequer, perhaps a Prime Minister."

"And old Gordon's son is cleverer than my boy—than the namesake of Kenelm Digby!" and Sir Peter sighed.

"I did not say that. I am cleverer than Chillingly Gordon, and the proof of it is that I am too clever to wish to be Prime Minister—very disagreeable office—hard work—irregular hours for meals—much abuse and confirmed dyspepsia."

Sir Peter went away rather downhearted. He found Chillingly Gordon at home in a lodging in Jermyn Street. Though

prepossessed against him by all he had heard, Sir Peter was soon propitiated in his favour. Gordon had a frank man-of-the-world way with him, and much too fine a tact to utter any sentiments likely to displease an old-fashioned country gentleman, and a relation who might possibly be of service in his career. He touched briefly, and with apparent feeling, on the unhappy litigation commenced by his father; spoke with affectionate praise of Kenelm; and with a discriminating good-nature of Mivers, as a man who, to parody the epigram on Charles II.,

“Never says a kindly thing
And never does a harsh one.”

Then he drew Sir Peter on to talk of the country and agricultural prospects. Learned that among his objects in visiting town, was the wish to inspect a patented hydraulic ram that might be very useful for his farmyard, which was ill supplied with water. Startled the Baronet by evincing some practical knowledge of mechanics; insisted on accompanying him to the city to inspect the ram; did so, and approved the purchase; took him next to see a new American reaping-machine, and did not part with him till he had obtained Sir Peter's promise to dine with him at the Garrick; an invitation peculiarly agreeable to Sir Peter, who had a natural curiosity to see some of the more recently distinguished frequenters of that social club. As, on quitting Gordon, Sir Peter took his way to the house of Leopold Travers, his thoughts turned with much kindness towards his young kinsman. “Mivers and Kenelm,” quoth he to himself, “gave me an unfavourable impression of this lad; they represent him as worldly, self-seeking, and so forth. But Mivers takes such cynical views of character, and Kenelm is too eccentric to judge fairly of a sensible man of the world. At all events, it is not like an egotist to put himself out of his way to be so civil to an old fellow like me. A young man about town must have pleasanter modes of passing his day than inspecting hydraulic rams and reaping-machines. Clever they allow him to be. Yes, decidedly clever—and not offensively clever—practical.”

Sir Peter found Travers in the dining-room with his daughter,

Mrs. Campion, and Lady Glenalvon. Travers was one of those men rare in middle age, who are more often to be found in their drawing-room than in their private study; he was fond of female society; and perhaps it was this predilection which contributed to preserve in him the charm of good breeding and winning manners. The two men had not met for many years; not indeed since Travers was at the zenith of his career of fashion, and Sir Peter was one of those pleasant *dilettanti* and half humoristic conversationalists who become popular and courted diners-out.

Sir Peter had originally been a moderate Whig because his father had been one before him, but he left the Whig party with the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby), and others, when it seemed to him that that party had ceased to be moderate.

Leopold Travers had, as a youth in the Guards, been a high Tory, but, siding with Sir Robert Peel on the repeal of the Corn Laws, remained with the Peelites after the bulk of the Tory party had renounced the guidance of their former chief, and now went with these Peelites in whatever direction the progress of the age might impel their strides in advance of Whigs, and in defiance of Tories.

However, it is not the politics of these two gentlemen that are in question now. As I have just said, they had not met for many years. Travers was very little changed. Sir Peter recognised him at a glance; Sir Peter was much changed, and Travers hesitated before, on hearing his name announced, he felt quite sure that it was the right Sir Peter towards whom he advanced, and to whom he extended his cordial hand. Travers preserved the colour of his hair and the neat proportions of his figure, and was as scrupulously well dressed as in his dandy days. Sir Peter, originally very thin and with fair locks and dreamy blue eyes, had now become rather portly, at least towards the middle of him—very grey—had long ago taken to spectacles—his dress, too, was very old-fashioned, and made by a country tailor. He looked quite as much a gentleman as Travers did; quite perhaps as healthy, allowing for difference of years; quite as likely to last his time. But

between them there was the difference of the nervous temperament and the lymphatic. Travers, with less brain than Sir Peter, had kept his brain constantly active; Sir Peter had allowed his brain to dawdle over old books and lazy delight in letting the hours slip by. Therefore Travers still looked young—alert—up to his day, up to anything; while Sir Peter, entering that drawing-room, seemed a sort of Rip van Winkle who had slept through the past generation, and looked on the present with eyes yet drowsy. Still, in those rare moments when he was thoroughly roused up, there would have been found in Sir Peter a glow of heart, nay, even a vigour of thought, much more expressive than the constitutional alertness that characterised Leopold Travers, of the attributes we most love and admire in the young.

"My dear Sir Peter, is it you? I am so glad to see you again," said Travers. "What an age since we met, and how condescendingly kind you were then to me; silly fop that I was! But by-gones are by-gones; come to the present. Let me introduce to you, first, my valued friend, Mrs. Campion, whose distinguished husband you remember. Ah, what pleasant meetings we had at his house! And next, that young lady of whom she takes motherly charge; my daughter Cecilia. Lady Glenalvon, your wife's friend, of course needs no introduction, time stands still with her."

Sir Peter lowered his spectacles, which in reality he only wanted for books in small print, and gazed attentively on the three ladies—at each gaze a bow. But while his eyes were still lingeringly fixed on Cecilia, Lady Glenalvon advanced, naturally in right of rank and the claim of old acquaintance, the first of the three to greet him.

"Alas, my dear Sir Peter! time does not stand still for any of us; but what matter, if it leaves pleasant footprints? When I see you again, my youth comes before me. My early friend, Caroline Brotherton, now Lady Chillingly; our girlish walks with each other; wreaths and ball-dresses the practical topic; prospective husbands, the dream at a distance. Come and sit here: tell me all about Caroline."

Sir Peter, who had little to say about Caroline that could

possibly interest anybody but himself, nevertheless took his seat beside Lady Glenalvon, and, as in duty bound, made the most flattering account of his *She Baronet* which experience or invention would allow. All the while, however, his thoughts were on Kenelm, and his eyes on Cecilia.

Cecilia resumes some mysterious piece of lady's work—no matter what—perhaps embroidery for a music-stool, perhaps a pair of slippers for her father (which, being rather vain of his feet and knowing they looked best in plain morocco, he will certainly never wear). Cecilia appears absorbed in her occupation; but her eyes and her thoughts are on Sir Peter. Why, my lady reader may guess. And oh, so flatteringly, so lovingly fixed! She thinks he has a most charming, intelligent, benignant countenance. She admires even his old-fashioned frock-coat, high neckcloth, and strapped trousers. She venerates his grey hairs, pure of dye. She tries to find a close resemblance between that fair, blue-eyed, plumpish, elderly gentleman and the lean, dark-eyed, saturnine, lofty Kenelm; she detects the likeness which nobody else would. She begins to love Sir Peter, though he has not said a word to her.

Ah! on this, a word for what it is worth to you, my young readers. You, sir, wishing to marry a girl who is to be deeply, lastingly in love with you, and a thoroughly good wife practically, consider well how she takes to your parents—how she attaches to them an inexpressible sentiment, a disinterested reverence—even should you but dimly recognise the sentiment, or feel the reverence, how if between you and your parents some little cause of coldness arise, she will charm you back to honour your father and your mother, even though they are not particularly genial to her—well, if you win that sort of girl as your wife think you have got a treasure. You have won a woman to whom Heaven has given the two best attributes—intense feeling of love, intense sense of duty. What, my dear lady reader, I say of one sex, I say of another, though in a less degree; because a girl who marries becomes of her husband's family, and the man does not become of his wife's. Still I distrust the depth of any man's love to a woman, if he does

not feel a great degree of tenderness (and forbearance where differences arise) for her parents. But the wife must not so put them in the foreground as to make the husband think he is cast in the cold of the shadow. Pardon this intolerable length of digression, dear reader—it is not altogether a digression, for it belongs to my tale that you should clearly understand the sort of girl that is personified in Cecilia Travers.

“What has become of Kenelm?” asked Lady Glenalvon.

“I wish I could tell you,” answered Sir Peter. “He wrote me word that he was going forth on rambles into ‘fresh woods and pastures new,’ perhaps for some weeks. I have not had a word from him since.”

“You make me uneasy,” said Lady Glenalvon. “I hope nothing can have happened to him—he cannot have fallen ill.”

Cecilia stops her work, and looks up wistfully.

“Make your mind easy,” said Travers with a laugh; “I am in this secret. He has challenged the champion of England, and gone into the country to train.”

“Very likely,” said Sir Peter, quietly; “I should not be in the least surprised, should you, Miss Travers?”

“I think it more probable that Mr. Chillingly is doing some kindness to others which he wishes to keep concealed.”

Sir Peter was pleased with this reply, and drew his chair nearer to Cecilia’s. Lady Glenalvon, charmed to bring those two together, soon rose and took leave.

Sir Peter remained nearly an hour talking chiefly with Cecilia, who won her way into his heart with extraordinary ease; and he did not quit the house till he had engaged her father, Mrs. Campion, and herself to pay him a week’s visit at Exmundham, towards the end of the London season, which was fast approaching.

Having obtained this promise, Sir Peter went away, and ten minutes after Mr. Gordon Chillingly entered the drawing-room. He had already established a visiting acquaintance with the Traverses. Travers had taken a liking to him. Mrs. Campion found him an extremely well-informed, unaffected young man very superior to young men in general. Cecilia was cordially polite to Kenelm’s cousin. Altogether that was a very happy

day for Sir Peter. He enjoyed greatly his dinner at the Garrick, where he met some old acquaintance and was presented to some new "celebrities." He observed that Gordon stood well with these eminent persons. Though as yet undistinguished himself, they treated him with a certain respect, as well as with evident liking. The most eminent of them, at least the one with the most solidly-established reputation, said in Sir Peter's ear, "You may be proud of your nephew, Gordon!"

"He is not my nephew, only the son of a very distant cousin."

"Sorry for that. But he will shed lustre on kinsfolk, however distant. Clever fellow, yet popular; rare combination—sure to rise."

Sir Peter suppressed a gulp in the throat. "Ah, if some one as eminent had spoken thus of Kenelm!"

But he was too generous to allow that half-envious sentiment to last more than a moment. Why should he not be proud of any member of the family who could irradiate the antique obscurity of the Chillingly race? And how agreeable this clever young man made himself to Sir Peter!

The next day Gordon insisted on accompanying him to see the latest acquisitions in the British Museum, and various other exhibitions, and went at night to the Prince of Wales's Theatre, where Sir Peter was infinitely delighted with an admirable little comedy by Mr. Robertson, admirably placed on the stage by Marie Wilton. The day after, when Gordon called on him at his hotel, he cleared his throat, and thus plunged at once into the communication he had hitherto delayed.

"Gordon, my boy, I owe you a debt, and I am now, thanks to Kenelm, able to pay it."

Gordon gave a little start of surprise, but remained silent.

"I told your father, shortly after Kenelm was born, that I meant to give up my London house, and lay by 1000*l.* a year for you, in compensation for your chance of succeeding to Exmundham should I have died childless. Well, your father did not seem to think much of that promise, and went to law with me about certain unquestionable rights of mine. How so clever a man could have made such a mistake would puzzle

me, if I did not remember that he had a quarrelsome temper. Temper is a thing that often dominates cleverness—an uncontrollable thing; and allowances must be made for it. Not being of a quarrelsome temper myself (the Chillinglys are a placid race), I did not make the allowance for your father's differing, and (for a Chillingly) abnormal, constitution. The language and the tone of his letter respecting it nettled me. I did not see why, thus treated, I should pinch myself to lay by a thousand a-year. Facilities for buying a property most desirable for the possessor of Exmundham presented themselves. I bought it with borrowed money, and though I gave up the house in London, I did not lay by the thousand a-year."

"My dear Sir Peter, I have always regretted that my poor father was misled—perhaps out of too paternal a care for my supposed interests—into that unhappy and fruitless litigation, after which no one could doubt that any generous intentions on your part would be finally abandoned. It has been a grateful surprise to me that I have been so kindly and cordially received into the family by Kenelm and yourself. Pray oblige me by dropping all reference to pecuniary matters—the idea of compensation to a very distant relative for the loss of expectations he had no right to form, is too absurd, for me at least, ever to entertain."

"But I am absurd enough to entertain it—though you express yourself in a very high-minded way. To come to the point, Kenelm is of age, and we have cut off the entail. The estate of course remains absolutely with Kenelm to dispose of, as it did before, and we must take it for granted that he will marry; at all events he cannot fall into your poor father's error; but whatever Kenelm hereafter does with his property, it is nothing to you, and is not to be counted upon. Even the title dies with Kenelm if he has no son. On resettling the estate, however, sums of money have been realised which, as I stated before, enable me to discharge the debt which Kenelm heartily agrees with me is due to you. 20,000*l.* are now lying at my bankers' to be transferred to yours; meanwhile, if you will call on my solicitor, Mr. Vining, Lincoln's-inn, you can see the new deed and give to him your receipt for the 20,000*l.* for which he holds

my cheque. Stop—stop—stop—I will not hear a word—no thanks, they are not due.”

Here Gordon, who had during this speech uttered various brief exclamations, which Sir Peter did not heed, caught hold of his kinsman’s hand, and, despite of all struggles, pressed his lips on it. “I must thank you, I must give some vent to my emotions,” cried Gordon. “This sum, great in itself, is far more to me than you can imagine—it opens my career—it assures my future.”

“So Kenelm tells me; he said that sum would be more use to you now than ten times the amount twenty years hence.”

“So it will—it will. And Kenelm consents to this sacrifice?”

“Consents—urges it!”

Gordon turned away his face, and Sir Peter resumed: “You want to get into Parliament; very natural ambition for a clever young fellow. I don’t presume to dictate politics to you. I hear you are what is called a Liberal; a man may be a Liberal, I suppose, without being a Jacobin.”

“I hope so, indeed. For my part I am anything but a violent man.”

“Violent, no! Who ever heard of a violent Chillingly? But I was reading in the newspaper to-day a speech addressed to some populous audience, in which the orator was for dividing all the lands and all the capital belonging to other people among the working class, calmly and quietly, without any violence, and deprecating violence; but saying, perhaps very truly, that the people to be robbed might not like it, and might offer violence; in which case woe betide them—it was they who would be guilty of violence—and they must take the consequences if they resisted the reasonable propositions of himself and his friends! That, I suppose, is among the new ideas with which Kenelm is more familiar than I am. Do you entertain those new ideas?”

“Certainly not—I despise the fools who do.”

“And you will not abet revolutionary measures if you get into Parliament?”

“My dear Sir Peter—I fear you have heard very false reports of my opinions if you put such questions. Listen,” and there-

with Gordon launched into dissertations very clever, very subtle, which committed him to nothing, beyond the wisdom of guiding popular opinions into right directions; what might be right directions he did not define, he left Sir Peter to guess them. Sir Peter did guess them, as Gordon meant he should, to be the directions which he, Sir Peter, thought right; and he was satisfied.

That subject disposed of, Gordon said, with much apparent feeling, "May I ask you to complete the favours you have lavished on me? I have never seen Exmundham, and the home of the race from which I sprang has a deep interest for me. Will you allow me to spend a few days with you, and under the shade of your own trees take lessons in political science from one who has evidently reflected on it profoundly?"

"Profoundly—no—a little—a little, as a mere bystander," said Sir Peter, modestly, but much flattered. "Come, my dear boy, by all means; you will have a hearty welcome. By the by, Travers and his handsome daughter promised to visit me in about a fortnight, why not come at the same time?"

A sudden flash lit up the young man's countenance. "I shall be so delighted," he cried. "I am but slightly acquainted with Mr. Travers, but I like him much, and Mrs. Campion is so well informed."

"And what say you to the girl?"

"The girl, Miss Travers. Oh, she is very well in her way. But I don't talk with young ladies more than I can help."

"Then you are like your cousin Kenelm?"

"I wish I were like him in other things."

"No, one such oddity in a family is quite enough. But though I would not have you change to a Kenelm, I would not change Kenelm for the most perfect model of a son that the world can exhibit." Delivering himself of this burst of parental fondness, Sir Peter shook hands with Gordon, and walked off to Mivers, who was to give him luncheon, and then accompany him to the station. Sir Peter was to return to Exmundham by the afternoon express.

Left alone, Gordon indulged in one of those luxurious guesses into the future which form the happiest moments in youth

when so ambitious as his. The sum Sir Peter placed at his disposal would insure his entrance in Parliament. He counted with confidence on early successes there. He extended the scope of his views. With such successes he might calculate with certainty on a brilliant marriage, augmenting his fortune, and confirming his position. He had previously fixed his thoughts on Cecilia Travers—I will do him the justice to say not from mercenary motives alone, but not certainly with the impetuous ardour of youthful love. He thought her exactly fitted to be the wife of an eminent public man, in person, acquirement, dignified yet popular manners. He esteemed her, he liked her, and then her fortune would add solidity to his position. In fact, he had that sort of rational attachment to Cecilia which wise men, like Lord Bacon and Montaigne, would commend to another wise man seeking a wife. What opportunities of awaking in herself a similar, perhaps a warmer, attachment the visit to Exmundham would afford! He had learned when he had called on the Traverses that they were going thither, and hence that burst of family sentiment which had procured the invitation to himself.

But he must be cautious, he must not prematurely awaken Travers's suspicions. He was not as yet a match that the squire could approve of for his heiress. And, though he was ignorant of Sir Peter's designs on that young lady, he was much too prudent to confide his own to a kinsman, of whose discretion he had strong misgivings. It was enough for him at present that way was opened for his own resolute energies. And cheerfully, though musingly, he weighed its obstacles, and divined its goal, as he paced his floor with bended head and restless strides, now quick, now slow.

Sir Peter, in the meanwhile, found a very good luncheon prepared for him at Mivers's rooms, which he had all to himself, for his host never "spoilt his dinner and insulted his breakfast" by that intermediate meal. He remained at his desk writing brief notes of business, or of pleasure, while Sir Peter did justice to lamb cutlets and grilled chicken. But he looked up from his task, with raised eyebrows, when Sir Peter, after a somewhat discursive account of his visit to the Traverses, his admiration of

Cecilia, and the adroitness with which, acting on his cousin's hint, he had engaged the family to spend a few days at Exmundham, added, "And, by the by, I have asked young Gordon to meet them."

"To meet them; meet Mr. and Miss Travers! you have? I thought you wished Kenelm to marry Cecilia. I was mistaken, you meant Gordon!"

"Gordon," exclaimed Sir Peter, dropping his knife and fork. "Nonsense, you don't suppose that Miss Travers prefers him to Kenelm, or that he has the presumption to fancy that her father would sanction his addresses?"

"I indulge in no suppositions of the sort. I content myself with thinking that Gordon is clever, insinuating, young; and it is a very good chance of bettering himself that you have thrown in his way. However, it is no affair of mine; and though on the whole I like Kenelm better than Gordon, still I like Gordon very well, and I have an interest in following his career which I can't say I have in conjecturing what may be Kenelm's—more likely no career at all."

"Mivers, you delight in provoking me; you do say such uncomfortable things. But, in the first place, Gordon spoke rather slightly of Miss Travers."

"Ah, indeed; that's a bad sign," muttered Mivers.

Sir Peter did not hear him, and went on.

"And, besides, I feel pretty sure that the dear girl has already a regard for Kenelm which allows no room for a rival. However, I shall not forget your hint, but keep a sharp lookout; and if I see the young man wants to be too sweet on Cecilia, I shall cut short his visit."

"Give yourself no trouble in the matter; it will do no good. Marriages are made in Heaven. Heaven's will be done. If I can get away I will run down to you for a day or two. Perhaps in that case you can ask Lady Glenalvon. I like her, and she likes Kenelm. Have you finished? I see the brougham is at the door, and we have to call at your hotel to take up your carpet-bag."

Mivers was deliberately sealing his notes while he thus spoke. He now rang for his servant, gave orders for their delivery, and

then followed Sir Peter down stairs and into the brougham. Not a word would he say more about Gordon, and Sir Peter shrank from telling him about the 20,000*l*. Chillingly Mivers was perhaps the last person to whom Sir Peter would be tempted to parade an act of generosity. Mivers might not unfrequently do a generous act himself, provided it was not divulged; but he had always a sneer for the generosity of others.

CHAPTER II.

WANDERING back towards Moleswich, Kenelm found himself a little before sunset on the banks of the garrulous brook, almost opposite to the house inhabited by Lily Mordaunt. He stood long and silently by the grassy margin, his dark shadow falling over the stream, broken into fragments by the eddy and strife of waves, fresh from their leap down the neighbouring waterfall. His eyes rested on the house and the garden lawn in the front. The upper windows were open. "I wonder which is hers," he said to himself. At last he caught a glimpse of the gardener, bending over a flower border with his watering-pot, and then moving slowly through the little shrubbery, no doubt to his own cottage. Now the lawn was solitary, save that a couple of thrushes dropped suddenly on the sward.

"Good evening, sir," said a voice. "A capital spot for trout this."

Kenelm turned his head, and beheld on the footpath, just behind him, a respectable elderly man, apparently of the class of a small retail tradesman, with a fishing-rod in his hand and a basket belted to his side.

"For trout," replied Kenelm; "I dare say. A strangely attractive spot indeed."

"Are you an angler, sir, if I may make bold to inquire?" asked the elderly man, somewhat perhaps puzzled as to the rank of the stranger; noticing, on the one hand, his dress and his mien, on the other, slung to his shoulders, the worn and

shabby knapsack which Kenelm had carried, at home and abroad, the preceding year.

"Ay, I am an angler."

"Then this is the best place in the whole stream. Look, sir, there is Izaak Walton's summer-house; and further down you see that white, neat-looking house. Well, that is my house, sir, and I have an apartment which I let to gentleman anglers. It is generally occupied throughout the summer months. I expect every day to have a letter to engage it, but it is vacant now. A very nice apartment, sir,—sitting-room and bedroom."

"Descende cælo, et dic age tibia," said Kenelm.

"Sir?" said the elderly man.

"I beg you ten thousand pardons. I have had the misfortune to have been at the university, and to have learned a little Latin, which sometimes comes back very inopportunistically. But, speaking in plain English, what I meant to say is this: I invoked the Muse to descend from heaven and bring with her—the original says a fife, but I meant—a fishing-rod. I should think your apartment would suit me exactly; pray show it to me."

"With the greatest pleasure," said the elderly man. "The Muse need not bring a fishing-rod! we have all sorts of tackle at your service, and a boat too, if you care for that. The stream hereabouts is so shallow and narrow that a boat is of little use till you get farther down."

"I don't want to get farther down; but should I want to get to the opposite bank, without wading across, would the boat take me, or is there a bridge?"

"The boat can take you. It is a flat-bottomed punt, and there is a bridge too for foot-passengers, just opposite my house; and between this and Moleswich, where the stream widens, there is a ferry. The stone bridge for traffic is at the farther end of the town."

"Good. Let us go at once to your house."

The two men walked on.

"By the by," said Kenelm, as they walked, "do you know much of the family that inhabit the pretty cottage on the opposite side, which we have just left behind?"

"Mrs. Cameron's. Yes, of course, a very good lady; and Mr. Melville, the painter. I am sure I ought to know, for he has often lodged with me when he came to visit Mrs. Cameron. He recommends my apartment to his friends, and they are my best lodgers. I like painters, sir, though I don't know much about paintings. They are pleasant gentlemen, and easily contented with my humble roof and fare."

"You are quite right. I don't know much about paintings myself, but I am inclined to believe that painters, judging not from what I have seen of them, for I have not a single acquaintance among them personally, but from what I have read of their lives, are, as a general rule, not only pleasant but noble gentlemen. They form within themselves desires to beautify or exalt commonplace things, and they can only accomplish their desires by a constant study of what is beautiful and what is exalted. A man constantly so engaged ought to be a very noble gentleman, even though he may be the son of a shoeblack. And living in a higher world than we do, I can conceive that he is, as you say, very well contented with humble roof and fare in the world we inhabit."

"Exactly, sir; I see—I see now, though you put it in a way that never struck me before."

"And yet," said Kenelm, looking benignly at the speaker, "you seem to me a well-educated and intelligent man; reflective on things in general, without being unmindful of your interests in particular, especially when you have lodgings to let. Do not be offended. That sort of man is not, perhaps born to be a painter, but I respect him highly. The world, sir, requires the vast majority of its inhabitants to live in it—to live by it. 'Each for himself, and God for us all.' The greatest happiness of the greatest number is best secured by a prudent consideration for Number One."

Somewhat to Kenelm's surprise (allowing that he had now learned enough of life to be occasionally surprised) the elderly man here made a dead halt, stretched out his hand cordially, and cried, "Hear, hear! I see that, like me, you are a decided democrat."

"Democrat! Pray, may I ask, not why you are one—that

would be a liberty, and democrats resent any liberty taken with themselves—but why you suppose I am?”

“You spoke of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. That is a democratic sentiment surely! Besides, did not you say, sir, that painters—painters, sir, painters, even if they were the sons of shoeblacks, were the true gentlemen—the true noblemen?”

“I did not say that exactly, to the disparagement of other gentlemen and nobles. But if I did, what then?”

“Sir, I agree with you. I despise rank, I despise dukes, and earls, and aristocrats. ‘An honest man’s the noblest work of God.’ Some poet says that. I think Shakspeare. Wonderful man, Shakspeare. A tradesman’s son—butcher, I believe. Eh! My uncle was a butcher, and might have been an alderman. I go along with you heartily, heartily. I am a democrat, every inch of me. Shake hands, sir—shake hands; we are all equals. ‘Each man for himself, and God for us all.’”

“I have no objection to shake hands,” said Kenelm; “but don’t let me owe your condescension to false pretences. Though we are all equal before the law, except the rich man, who has little chance of justice as against a poor man when submitted to an English jury, yet I utterly deny that any two men you select can be equals. One must beat the other in something, and when one man beats another, democracy ceases and aristocracy begins.”

“Aristocracy! I don’t see that. What do you mean by aristocracy?”

“The ascendancy of the better man. In a rude State the better man is the stronger; in a corrupt State, perhaps the more roguish; in modern republics the jobbers get the money and the lawyers get the power. In well-ordered States alone aristocracy appears at its genuine worth: the better man in birth, because respect for ancestry secures a higher standard of honour; the better man in wealth, because of the immense uses to enterprise, energy, and the fine arts, which rich men must be if they follow their natural inclinations; the better man in character, the better man in ability, for reasons too obvious to define; and these two last will beat the others

in the government of the State, if the State be flourishing and free. All these four classes of better men constitute true aristocracy; and when a better government than a true aristocracy shall be devised by the wit of man, we shall not be far off from the Millennium and the reign of saints. But here we are at the house—yours, is it not? I like the look of it extremely.”

The elderly man now entered the little porch over which clambered honeysuckle and ivy intertwined, and ushered Kenelm into a pleasant parlour, with a bay window, and an equally pleasant bedroom behind it.

“Will it do, sir?”

“Perfectly. I take it from this moment. My knapsack contains all I shall need for the night. There is a port-manteau of mine at Mr. Somers’s shop, which can be sent here in the morning.”

“But we have not settled about the terms,” said the elderly man, beginning to feel rather doubtful whether he ought thus to have installed in his home a stalwart pedestrian of whom he knew nothing, and who, though talking glibly enough on other things, had preserved an ominous silence on the subject of payment.

“Terms—true, name them.”

“Including board?”

“Certainly. Chameleons live on air, Democrats on windbags. I have a more vulgar appetite, and require mutton.”

“Meat is very dear nowadays,” said the elderly man, “and I am afraid, for board and lodging, I cannot charge you less than 3*l.* 3*s.*—say 3*l.* a-week. My lodgers usually pay a week in advance.”

“Agreed,” said Kenelm, extracting three sovereigns from his purse. “I have dined already—I want nothing more this evening; let me detain you no further. Be kind enough to shut the door after you.”

When he was alone, Kenelm seated himself in the recess of the bay window, against the casement, and looked forth intently. Yes—he was right—he could see from thence the home of Lily. Not, indeed, more than a white gleam of the

house through the interstices of trees and shrubs—but the gentle lawn sloping to the brook, with the great willow at the end dipping its boughs into the water, and shutting out all view beyond itself by its bower of tender leaves. The young man bent his face on his hands and mused dreamily: the evening deepened, the stars came forth, the rays of the moon now peered aslant through the arching dips of the willow, silvering their way as they stole to the waves below.

“Shall I bring lights, sir? or do you prefer a lamp or candles?” asked a voice behind—the voice of the elderly man’s wife. “Do you like the shutters closed?”

The question startled the dreamer. They seemed mocking his own old mockings on the romance of love. Lamp or candles, practical lights for prosaic eyes, and shutters closed against moon and stars!

“Thank you, ma’am, not yet,” he said; and rising quietly he placed his hand on the window-sill, swung himself through the open casement, and passed slowly along the margin of the rivulet, by a path checkered alternately with shade and star-light; the moon yet more slowly rising above the willows, and lengthening its track along the wavelets.

CHAPTER III.

THOUGH Kenelm did not think it necessary at present to report to his parents, or his London acquaintances, his recent movements and his present resting place, it never entered into his head to lurk *perdu* in the immediate vicinity of Lily’s house, and seek opportunities of meeting her clandestinely. He walked to Mrs. Braefield’s the next morning, found her at home, and said in rather a more off-hand manner than was habitual to him, “I have hired a lodging in your neighbourhood, on the banks of the brook, for the sake of its trout-fishing. So you will allow me to call on you sometimes, and one of these days I hope you will give me the dinner I so unceremoniously

rejected some days ago. I was then summoned away suddenly, much against my will."

"Yes; my husband said that you shot off from him with a wild exclamation about duty."

"Quite true; my reason, and I may say my conscience, were greatly perplexed upon a matter extremely important and altogether new to me. I went to Oxford—the place above all others in which questions of reason and conscience are most deeply considered, and perhaps least satisfactorily solved. Relieved in my mind by my visit to a distinguished ornament of that university, I felt I might indulge in a summer holiday, and here I am."

"Ah! I understand. You had religious doubts—thought perhaps of turning Roman Catholic. I hope you are not going to do so?"

"My doubts were not necessarily of a religious nature. Pagans have entertained them."

"Whatever they were I am pleased to see they did not prevent your return," said Mrs. Braefield, graciously. "But where have you found a lodging—why not have come to us? My husband would have been scarcely less glad than myself to receive you."

"You say that so sincerely, and so cordially, that to answer by a brief 'I thank you' seems rigid and heartless. But there are times in life when one yearns to be alone—to commune with one's own heart, and, if possible, be still; I am in one of those moody times. Bear with me."

Mrs. Braefield looked at him with affectionate, kindly interest. She had gone before him through the solitary load of young romance. She remembered her dreamy, dangerous girlhood, when she, too, had yearned to be alone.

"Bear with you—yes, indeed. I wish, Mr. Chillingly, that I were your sister, and that you would confide in me. Something troubles you."

"Troubles me—no. My thoughts are happy ones, and they may sometimes perplex me, but they do not trouble." Kenelm said this very softly; and in the warmer light of his musing eyes, the sweeter play of his tranquil smile, there was an expression which did not belie his words.

"You have not told me where you have found a lodging," said Mrs. Braefield, somewhat abruptly.

"Did I not?" replied Kenelm, with an unconscious start, as from an abstracted reverie. "With no undistinguished host, I presume, for when I asked him this morning for the right address of this cottage, in order to direct such luggage as I have to be sent there, he gave me his card with a grand air, saying, 'I am pretty well known at Moleswich, by and beyond it.' I have not yet looked at his card. Oh, here it is—'Algernon Sidney Gale Jones, Cromwell Lodge'—you laugh. What do you know of him?"

"I wish my husband were here; he would tell you more about him. Mr. Jones is quite a character."

"So I perceive."

"A great radical—very talkative and troublesome at the vestry; but our vicar, Mr. Emlyn, says there is no real harm in him—that his bark is worse than his bite—and that his republican or radical notions must be laid to the door of his godfathers! In addition to his name of Jones, he was unhappily christened Gale; Gale Jones being a noted radical orator at the time of his birth. And I suppose Algernon Sidney was prefixed to Gale in order to devote the new-born more emphatically to republican principles."

"Naturally, therefore, Algernon Sidney Gale Jones baptises his house Cromwell Lodge, seeing that Algernon Sidney held the Protectorate in especial abhorrence, and that the original Gale Jones, if an honest radical, must have done the same, considering what rough usage the advocates of Parliamentary Reform met with at the hands of his Highness. But we must be indulgent to men who have been unfortunately christened before they had any choice of the names that were to rule their fate. I myself should have been less whimsical had I not been named after a Kenelm who believed in sympathetic powders. Apart from his political doctrines, I like my landlord—he keeps his wife in excellent order. She seems frightened at the sound of her own footsteps, and glides to and fro, a pallid image of submissive womanhood in list slippers."

"Great recommendations certainly, and Cromwell Lodge is very prettily situated. By the by, it is very near Mrs. Cameron's.

"Now I think of it, so it is," said Kenelm, innocently.

Ah! my friend Kenelm, enemy of shams, and truth-teller *par excellence*, what hast thou come to? How are the mighty fallen! "Since you say you will dine with us, suppose we fix the day after to-morrow, and I will ask Mrs. Cameron and Lily."

"The day after to-morrow—I shall be delighted."

"An early hour?"

"The earlier the better."

"Is six o'clock too early?"

"Too early—certainly not—on the contrary——Good-day—I must now go to Mrs. Somers, she has charge of my portmanteau."

Then Kenelm rose.

"Poor dear Lily!" said Mrs. Braefield; "I wish she were less of a child."

Kenelm reseated himself.

"Is she a child? I don't think she is actually a child."

"Not in years; she is between seventeen and eighteen; but my husband says that she is too childish to talk to, and always tells me to take her off his hands; he would rather talk with Mrs. Cameron."

"Indeed!"

"Still I find something in her."

"Indeed!"

"Not exactly childish, nor quite womanish."

"What then?"

"I can't exactly define. But you know what Mr. Melville and Mrs. Cameron call her as a pet name?"

"No."

"Fairy! Fairies have no age; fairy is neither child nor woman."

"Fairy. She is called fairy by those who know her best? Fairy!"

"And she believes in fairies."

"Does she?—so do I. Pardon me, I must be off. The day after to-morrow—six o'clock."

"Wait one moment," said Elsie, going to her writing-table. "Since you pass Grasmere on your way home, will you kindly leave this note?"

"I thought Grasmere was a lake in the north?"

"Yes; but Mr. Melville chose to call the cottage by the name of the lake. I think the first picture he ever sold was a view of Wordsworth's house there. Here is my note to ask Mrs. Cameron to meet you; but if you object to be my messenger——"

"Object! my dear Mrs. Braefield. As you say, I pass close by the cottage."

CHAPTER IV.

KENELM went with somewhat rapid pace from Mrs. Braefield's to the shop in the High Street kept by Will Somers. Jessie was behind the counter, which was thronged with customers. Kenelm gave her a brief direction about his portmanteau, and then passed into the back parlour where her husband was employed on his baskets—with the baby's cradle in the corner, and its grandmother rocking it mechanically, as she read a wonderful missionary tract full of tales of miraculous conversions: into what sort of Christians we will not pause to inquire.

"And so you are happy, Will?" said Kenelm, seating himself between the basketmaker and the infant; the dear old mother beside him, reading the tract which linked her dreams of life eternal with life just opening in the cradle that she rocked. He not happy! How he pitied the man who could ask such a question.

"Happy, sir! I should think so, indeed. There is not a night on which Jessie and I, and mother too, do not pray that some day or other you may be as happy. By and by the baby

will learn to pray 'God bless papa, and mamma, grandmamma, and Mr. Chillingly.'"

"There is some one else much more deserving of prayers than I, though needing them less. You will know some day—pass it by now. To return to the point; you are happy; if I asked why, would you not say, 'Because I have married the girl I love, and have never repented'?"

"Well, sir, that is about it; though, begging your pardon, I think it could be put more prettily somehow."

"You are right there. But perhaps love and happiness never yet found any words that could fitly express them. Good-bye, for the present."

Ah! if it were as mere materialists, or as many middle-aged or elderly folks, who if materialists, are so without knowing it, unreflectingly say, "The main element of happiness is bodily or animal health and strength," that question which Chillingly put would appear a very unmeaning or a very insulting one addressed to a pale cripple, who, however improved of late in health, would still be sickly and ailing all his life,—put, too, by a man of the rarest conformation of physical powers that nature can adapt to physical enjoyment—a man who, since the age in which memory commences, had never known what it was to be unwell, who could scarcely understand you if you talked of a finger-ache, and whom those refinements of mental culture which multiply the delights of the senses had endowed with the most exquisite conceptions of such happiness as mere nature and its instincts can give! But Will did not think the question unmeaning or insulting. He, the poor cripple, felt a vast superiority on the scale of joyous being over the young Hercules, well born, cultured, and wealthy, who could know so little of happiness as to ask the crippled basketmaker if he were happy—he, blessed husband and father!

CHAPTER V.

LILY was seated on the grass under a chestnut tree on the lawn. A white cat, not long emerged from kittenhood, curled itself by her side. On her lap was an open volume, which she was reading with the greatest delight.

Mrs. Cameron came from the house, looked round, perceived the girl, and approached; and either she moved so gently, or Lily was so absorbed in her book, that the latter was not aware of her presence till she felt a light hand on her shoulder, and, looking up, recognised her aunt's gentle face.

"Ah! Fairy, Fairy, that silly book, when you ought to be at your French verbs. What will your guardian say when he comes and finds you have so wasted time?"

"He will say that fairies never waste their time; and he will scold you for saying so." Therewith Lily threw down the book, sprang to her feet, wound her arm round Mrs. Cameron's neck, and kissed her fondly. "There! is *that* wasting time? I love you so, aunty. In a day like this I think I love everybody and everything!" As she said this, she drew up her lithe form, looked into the blue sky, and with parted lips seemed to drink in air and sunshine. Then she woke up the dozing cat, and began chasing it round the lawn.

Mrs. Cameron stood still, regarding her with moistened eyes. just at that moment Kenelm entered through the garden gate. He, too, stood still, his eyes fixed on the undulating movements of Fairy's exquisite form. She had arrested her favourite, and was now at play with it, shaking off her straw hat, and drawing the ribbon attached to it tantalisingly along the smooth grass. Her rich hair thus released and dishevelled by the exercise, fell partly over her face in wavy ringlets; and her musical laugh and words of sportive endearment, sounded on Kenelm's ear more joyously than the thrill of the skylark, more sweetly than the coo of the ring-dove.

He approached towards Mrs. Cameron. Lily turned suddenly and saw him. Instinctively she smoothed back her loosened

tresses, replaced the straw hat, and came up demurely to his side just as he had accosted her aunt.

"Pardon my intrusion, Mrs. Cameron. I am the bearer of this note from Mrs. Braefield." While the aunt read the note, he turned to the niece.

"You promised to show me the picture, Miss Mordaunt."

"But that was a long time ago."

"Too long to expect a lady's promise to be kept?"

Lily seemed to ponder that question, and hesitated before she answered.

"I will show you the picture. I don't think I ever broke a promise yet, but I shall be more careful how I make one in future."

"Why so?"

"Because you did not value mine when I made it, and that hurt me." Lily lifted up her head with a bewitching stateliness, and added gravely, "I was offended."

"Mrs. Braefield is very kind," said Mrs. Cameron; "she asks us to dine the day after to-morrow. You would like to go, Lily?"

"All grown-up people, I suppose? No, thank you, dear aunt. You go alone, I would rather stay at home. May I have little Clemmy to play with? She will bring Juba, and Blanche is very partial to Juba, though she does scratch him."

"Very well, my dear, you shall have your playmate, and I will go by myself."

Kenelm stood aghast. "You will not go, Miss Mordaunt; Mrs. Braefield will be so disappointed. And if you don't go, whom shall I have to talk to? I don't like grown-up people better than you do."

"You are going?"

"Certainly."

"And if I go you will talk to me? I am afraid of Mr. Braefield. He is so wise."

"I will save you from him, and will not utter a grain of wisdom."

"Aunty, I will go."

Here Lily made a bound and caught up Blanche, who,

taking her kisses resignedly, stared with evident curiosity upon Kenelm.

Here a bell within the house rang the announcement of luncheon. Mrs. Cameron invited Kenelm to partake of that meal. He felt as Romulus might have felt when first invited to taste the ambrosia of the gods. Yet certainly that luncheon was not such as might have pleased Kenelm Chillingly in the early days of the Temperance Hotel. But somehow or other of late he had lost appetite; and on this occasion a very modest share of a very slender dish of chicken fricassee, and a few cherries daintily arranged on vine leaves, which Lily selected for him, contented him—as probably a very little ambrosia contented Romulus while feasting his eyes on Hebe.

Luncheon over, while Mrs. Cameron wrote her reply to Elsie, Kenelm was conducted by Lily into her own *own* room, in vulgar parlance her *boudoir*, though it did not look as if any one ever *bouded* there. It was exquisitely pretty—pretty not as a woman's, but a child's dream of the own own room she would like to have—wondrously neat and cool, and pure-looking! a trellis paper, the trellis gay with roses and woodbine, and birds and butterflies; draperies of muslin, festooned with dainty tassels and ribbons; a dwarf bookcase, that seemed well stored, at least as to bindings; a dainty little writing-table in French *marqueterie*—looking too fresh and spotless to have known hard service. The casement was open, and in keeping with the trellis paper; woodbine and roses from without encroached on the window-sides, gently stirred by the faint summer breeze, and wafted sweet odours into the little room. Kenelm went to the window, and glanced on the view beyond. "I was right," he said to himself; "I divined it." But though he spoke in a low inward whisper, Lily, who had watched his movements in surprise, overheard.

"You divined it. Divined what?"

"Nothing, nothing; I was but talking to myself."

"Tell me what you divined—I insist upon it!" and Fairy petulantly stamped her tiny foot on the floor.

"Do you? Then I obey. I have taken a lodging for a short time on the other side of the brook—Cromwell Lodge—and

seeing your house as I passed, I divined that your room was in this part of it. How soft here is the view of the water! Ah! yonder is Izaak Walton's summer-house."

"Don't talk about Izaak Walton, or I shall quarrel with you, as I did with Lion when he wanted me to like that cruel book."

"Who is Lion?"

"Lion—of course, my guardian. I called him Lion when I was a little child. It was on seeing in one of his books a print of a lion playing with a little child."

"Ah! I know the design well," said Kenelm, with a slight sigh. "It is from an antique Greek gem. It is not the lion that plays with the child, it is the child that masters the lion, and the Greeks called the child 'Love.'"

This idea seemed beyond Lily's perfect comprehension. She paused before she answered, with the *naïveté* of a child six years old—

"I see now why I mastered Blanche, who will not make friends with any one else—I love Blanche. Ah, that reminds me—come and look at the picture."

She went to the wall over the writing-table, drew a silk curtain aside from a small painting in a dainty velvet framework, and pointing to it, cried with triumph—"Look there! is it not beautiful?"

Kenelm had been prepared to see a landscape, or a group, or anything but what he did see—it was the portrait of Blanche when a kitten.

Little elevated though the subject was, it was treated with graceful fancy. The kitten had evidently ceased from playing with the cotton reel that lay between her paws, and was fixing her gaze intently on a bullfinch that had lighted on a spray within her reach.

"You understand," said Lily, placing her hand on his arm, and drawing him towards what she thought the best light for the picture; "it is Blanche's first sight of a bird. Look well at her face; don't you see a sudden surprise—half joy, half fear? She ceases to play with the reel. Her intellect—or, as Mr. Braefield would say, 'her instinct'—is for the first time aroused. From that moment Blanche was no longer a

mere kitten. And it required, oh, the most careful education, to teach her not to kill the poor little birds. She never does now, but I had such trouble with her."

"I cannot say honestly that I do see all that you do in the picture; but it seems to me very simply painted, and was, no doubt, a striking likeness of Blanche at that early age."

"So it was. Lion drew the first sketch from life with his pencil; and when he saw how pleased I was with it—he was so good—he put it on canvas, and let me sit by him while he painted it. Then he took it away, and brought it back finished and framed as you see, last May, a present for my birthday."

"You were born in May—with the flowers."

"The best of all the flowers are born in May—violets."

"But they are born in the shade, and cling to it. Surely, as a child of May, you love the sun!"

"I love the sun—it is never too bright nor too warm for me. But I don't think that, though born in May, I was born in sunlight. I feel more like my own native self when I creep into the shade and sit down alone. I can weep then."

As she thus shyly ended, the character of her whole countenance was changed—its infantine mirthfulness was gone; a grave, thoughtful, even a sad, expression settled on the tender eyes and the tremulous lips.

Kenelm was so touched that words failed him, and there was silence for some moments between the two. At length Kenelm said, slowly—

"You say your own native self. Do you, then, feel, as I often do, that there is a second, possibly a *native*, self, deep hid beneath the self—not merely what we show to the world in common (that may be merely a mask)—but the self that we ordinarily accept even when in solitude as our own; an inner innermost self; oh, so different and so rarely coming forth from its hiding-place; asserting its right of sovereignty, and putting out the other self, as the sun puts out a star?"

Had Kenelm thus spoken to a clever man of the world—to a Chillingly Mivers—to a Chillingly Gordon—they certainly

would not have understood him. But to such men he never would have thus spoken. He had a vague hope that this childlike girl, despite so much of childlike talk, would understand him; and she did at once.

Advancing close to him, again laying her hand on his arm, and looking up towards his bended face with startled wondering eyes, no longer sad, yet not mirthful—

“How true! You have felt that too? Where *is* that innermost self, so deep down—so deep; yet when it does come forth, so much higher—higher—immeasurably higher than one’s everyday self? It does not tame the butterflies—it longs to get to the stars. And then—and then—ah, how soon it fades back again! You have felt that. Does *it* not puzzle you?”

“Very much.”

“Are there no wise books about it that help to explain?”

“No wise books in my very limited reading even hint at the puzzle. I fancy that it is one of those insoluble questions that rest between the infant and his Maker. Mind and soul are not the same things, and what you and I call ‘wise men’ are always confounding the two——”

Fortunately for all parties—especially the reader; for Kenelm had here got on the back of one of his most cherished hobbies—the distinction between psychology and metaphysics—soul and mind scientifically or logically considered—Mrs. Cameron here entered the room and asked him how he liked the picture.

“Very much. I am no great judge of the art. But it pleased me at once, and now that Miss Mordaunt has interpreted the intention of the painter, I admire it yet more.”

“Lily chooses to interpret his intention in her own way, and insists that Blanche’s expression of countenance conveys an idea of her capacity to restrain her destructive instinct, and be taught to believe that it is wrong to kill birds for mere sport. For food she need not kill them, seeing that Lily takes care that she has plenty to eat. But I don’t think that Mr. Mervale had the slightest suspicion that he had indicated that capacity in his picture.”

"He must have done so, whether he suspected it or not," said Lily, positively; "otherwise he would not be truthful."

"Why not truthful?" asked Kenelm.

"Don't you see? If you were called upon to describe truthfully the character of any little child, would you only speak of such naughty impulses as all children have in common, and not even hint at the capacity to be made better?"

"Admirably put!" said Kenelm. "There is no doubt that a much fiercer animal than a cat—a tiger, for instance, or a conquering hero—may be taught to live on the kindest possible terms with the creatures on which it was its natural instinct to prey."

"Yes—yes; hear that, aunty! You remember the Happy Family that we saw, eight years ago, at Moleswich fair, with a cat not half so nice as Blanche allowing a mouse to bite her ear? Well, then, would Lion not have been shamefully false to Blanche if he had not——"

Lily paused and looked half shyly, half archly, at Kenelm, then added, in slow, deep-drawn tones—"given a glimpse of her innermost self?"

"Innermost self!" repeated Mrs. Cameron, perplexed and laughing gently.

Lily stole nearer to Kenelm and whispered—

"Is not one's innermost self one's best self?"

Kenelm smiled approvingly. The fairy was rapidly deepening her spell upon him. If Lily had been his sister, his betrothed, his wife, how fondly he would have kissed her! She had expressed a thought over which he had often inaudibly brooded, and she had clothed it with all the charm of her own infantine fancy and womanlike tenderness! Goethe has said somewhere, or is reported to have said, "There is something in every man's heart, that, if you knew it, would make you hate him." What Goethe said, still more what Goethe is reported to have said, is never to be taken quite literally. No comprehensive genius—genius at once poet and thinker—ever can be so taken. The sun shines on a dung-hill. But the sun has no predilection for a dunghill. It only

comprehends a dunghill as it does a rose. Still Kenelm had always regarded that loose ray from Goethe's prodigal orb with an abhorrence most unphilosophical for a philosopher so young as generally to take upon oath any words of so great a master. Kenelm thought that the root of all private benevolence, of all enlightened advance in social reform, lay in the adverse theorem—that in every man's nature there lies a something that, could we get at it, cleanse it, polish it, render it visibly clear to our eyes, would make us love him. And in this spontaneous, uncultured sympathy with the results of so many laborious struggles of his own scholastic intellect against the dogma of the German giant, he felt as if he had found a younger—true, but oh, how much more subduing, because so much younger—sister of his own man's soul. Then came, so strongly, the sense of her sympathy with his own strange innermost self which a man will never feel more than once in his life with a daughter of Eve, that he dared not trust himself to speak. He somewhat hurried his leave-taking.

Passing in the rear of the garden towards the bridge which led to his lodging, he found on the opposite bank, at the other end of the bridge, Mr. Algernon Sidney Gale Jones peacefully angling for trout.

"Will you not try the stream to-day, sir? Take my rod."

Kenelm remembered that Lily had called Izaak Walton's book "a cruel one," and shaking his head gently, went his way into the house. There he seated himself silently by the window, and looked towards the grassy lawn and the dipping willows, and the gleam of the white walls through the girdling trees, as he had looked the eve before.

"Ah!" he murmured at last, "if, as I hold, a man but tolerably good does good unconsciously merely by the act of living — if he can no more traverse his way from the cradle to the grave, without letting fall, as he passes, the germs of strength, fertility, and beauty, than can a reckless wind or a vagrant bird, which, where it passes, leaves behind it the oak, the cornsheaf, or the flower—ah, if that be so, how tenfold the good must be, if the man find the gentler and purer duplicate of his own being in that mysterious, undefinable union which

Shakespeares and day-labourers equally agree to call love which Newton never recognises, and which Descartes (his only rival in the realms of thought at once severe and imaginative) reduces into links of early association, explaining that he loved women who squinted, because, when he was a boy, a girl with that infirmity squinted at him from the other side of his father's garden-wall! Ah! be this union between man and woman what it may; if it be really love—really the bond which embraces the innermost and bettermost self of both—how, daily, hourly, momentarily, should we bless God for having made it so easy to be happy and to be good!”

CHAPTER VI.

THE dinner-party at Mr. Braefield's was not quite so small as Kenelm had anticipated. When the merchant heard from his wife that Kenelm was coming, he thought it would be but civil to the young gentleman to invite a few other persons to meet him.

“You see, my dear,” he said to Elsie, “Mrs. Cameron is a very good, simple sort of woman, but not particularly amusing; and Lily, though a pretty girl, is so exceedingly childish. We owe much, my sweet Elsie, to this Mr. Chillingly”—here there was a deep tone of feeling in his voice and look—“and we must make it as pleasant for him as we can. I will bring down my friend Sir Thomas, and you ask Mr. Emlyn and his wife. Sir Thomas is a very sensible man, and Emlyn a very learned one. So Mr. Chillingly will find people worth talking too. By the by, when I go to town I will send down a haunch of venison from Groves’.”

So when Kenelm arrived, a little before six o'clock, he found in the drawing-room the Rev. Charles Emlyn, vicar of Moleswich proper, with his spouse, and a portly middle-aged man, to whom, as Sir Thomas Pratt, Kenelm was introduced. Sir Thomas was an eminent city banker. The ceremonies of introduction over, Kenelm stole to Elsie's side.

"I thought I was to meet Mrs. Cameron. I don't see her."

"She will be here presently. It looks as if it might rain, and I have sent the carriage for her and Lily. Ah, here they are!"

Mrs. Cameron entered, clothed in black silk. She always wore black; and behind her came Lily, in the spotless colour that became her name; no ornament, save a slender gold chain to which was appended a single locket, and a single blush rose in her hair. She looked wonderfully lovely; and with that loveliness there was a certain nameless air of distinction, possibly owing to delicacy of form and colouring; possibly to a certain grace of carriage, which was not without a something of pride.

Mr. Braefield, who was a very punctual man, made a sign to his servant, and in another moment or so dinner was announced. Sir Thomas, of course, took in the hostess; Mr. Braefield, the vicar's wife (she was a dean's daughter); Kenelm, Mrs. Cameron; and the vicar, Lily.

On seating themselves at the table Kenelm was on the left-hand, next to the hostess, and separated from Lily by Mrs. Cameron and Mr. Emlyn; and when the vicar had said grace, Lily glanced behind his back and her aunt's at Kenelm (who did the same thing) making at him what the French call a *moue*. The pledge to her had been broken. She was between two men very much grown up—the vicar and the host. Kenelm returned the *moue* with a mournful smile and an involuntary shrug.

All was silent till, after his soup and his first glass of sherry, Sir Thomas began—

"I think, Mr. Chillingly, we have met before, though I had not the honour then of making your acquaintance." Sir Thomas paused before he added, "Not long ago; the last State ball at Buckingham Palace."

Kenelm bent his head acquiescingly. He had been at that ball.

"You were talking with a very charming woman—a friend of mine—Lady Glenalvon."

(Sir Thomas was Lady Glenalvon's banker.)

"I remember perfectly," said Kenelm. "We were seated in

the picture gallery. You came to speak to Lady Glenalvon, and I yielded to you my place on the settee."

"Quite true; and I think you joined a young lady—very handsome—the great heiress, Miss Travers."

Kenelm again bowed, and turning away as politely as he could, addressed himself to Mrs. Cameron. Sir Thomas, satisfied that he had impressed on his audience the facts of his friendship with Lady Glenalvon and his attendance at the court ball, now directed his conversational powers towards the vicar, who, utterly foiled in the attempt to draw out Lily, met the baronet's advances with the ardour of a talker too long suppressed. Kenelm continued, unmolested, to ripen his acquaintance with Mrs. Cameron. She did not, however, seem to lend a very attentive ear to his preliminary commonplace remarks about scenery or weather, but at his first pause, said,

"Sir Thomas spoke about a Miss Travers: is she related to a gentleman who was once in the Guards—Leopold Travers?"

"She is his daughter. Did you ever know Leopold Travers?"

"I have heard him mentioned by friends of mine long ago—long ago," replied Mrs. Cameron with a sort of weary languor not unwonted, in her voice and manner; and then, as if dismissing the bygone reminiscence from her thoughts, changed the subject.

"Lily tells me, Mr. Chillingly, that you said you were staying at Mr. Jones's, Cromwell Lodge. I hope you are made comfortable there."

"Very. The situation is singularly pleasant."

"Yes, it is considered the prettiest spot on the brookside and used to be a favourite resort for anglers; but the trout, I believe, are growing scarce; at least, now that the fishing in the Thames is improved, poor Mr. Jones complains that his old lodgers desert him. Of course you took the rooms for the sake of the fishing. I hope the sport may be better than it is said to be."

"It is of little consequence to me; I do not care much about fishing; and since Miss Mordaunt calls the book which first enticed me to take to it 'a cruel one,' I feel as if the

trout had become as sacred as crocodiles were to the ancient Egyptians."

"Lily is a foolish child on such matters. She cannot bear the thought of giving pain to any dumb creature; and just before our garden there are a few trout which she has tamed. They feed out of her hand; she is always afraid they will wander away and get caught."

"But Mr. Melville is an angler?"

"Several years ago he would sometimes pretend to fish, but I believe it was rather an excuse for lying on the grass and reading 'the cruel book,' or perhaps, rather, for sketching. But now he is seldom here till autumn, when it grows too cold for such amusement."

Here Sir Thomas's voice was so loudly raised that it stopped the conversation between Kenelm and Mrs. Cameron. He had got into some question of politics on which he and the vicar did not agree, and the discussion threatened to become warm, when Mrs. Braefield, with a woman's true tact, broached a new topic, in which Sir Thomas was immediately interested, relating to the construction of a conservatory for orchids that he meditated adding to his country-house, and in which frequent appeal was made to Mrs. Cameron, who was considered an accomplished florist, and who seemed at some time or other in her life to have acquired a very intimate acquaintance with the costly family of orchids.

When the ladies retired Kenelm found himself seated next to Mr. Emlyn, who astounded him by a complimentary quotation from one of his own Latin prize poems at the university, hoped he would make some stay at Moleswich, told him of the principal places in the neighbourhood worth visiting, and offered him the run of his library, which he flattered himself was rather rich, both in the best editions of Greek and Latin classics and in early English literature. Kenelm was much pleased with the scholarly vicar, especially when Mr. Emlyn began to speak about Mrs. Cameron and Lily. Of the first he said, "She is one of those women in whom Quiet is so predominant that it is long before one can know what undercurrents of good feeling flow beneath the unruffled surface. I wish, however, she was

a little more active in the management and education of her niece—a girl in whom I feel a very anxious interest, and whom I doubt if Mrs. Cameron understands. Perhaps, however, only a poet, and a very peculiar sort of poet, can understand her: Lily Mordaunt is herself a poem.”

“I like your definition of her,” said Kenelm. “There is certainly something about her which differs much from the prose of common life.”

“You probably know Wordsworth’s lines:

“‘. . . and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Shall pass into her face.’

They are lines that many critics have found unintelligible; but Lily seems like the living key to them.”

Kenelm’s dark face lighted up, but he made no answer.

“Only,” continued Mr. Emlyn, “how a girl of that sort, left wholly to herself, untrained, undisciplined, is to grow up into the practical uses of womanhood, is a question that perplexes and saddens me.”

“Any more wine?” asked the host, closing a conversation on commercial matters with Sir Thomas. “No?—shall we join the ladies?”

CHAPTER VII.

THE drawing-room was deserted; the ladies were in the garden. As Kenelm and Mr. Emlyn walked side by side towards the group (Sir Thomas and Mr. Braefield following at a little distance), the former asked, somewhat abruptly, “What sort of man is Miss Cameron’s guardian, Mr. Melville?”

“I can scarcely answer that question. I see little of him when he comes here. Formerly, he used to run down pretty often with a harum-scarum set of young fellows, quartered at Cromwell Lodge—Grasmere had no accommodation for them—students in the Academy, I suppose. For some years he

has not brought those persons, and when he does come himself it is but for a few days. He has the reputation of being very wild."

Further conversation was here stopped. The two men, while they thus talked, had been diverging from the straight way across the lawn towards the ladies, turning into sequestered paths through the shrubbery; now they emerged into the open sward, just before a table, on which coffee was served, and round which all the rest of the party were gathered.

"I hope, Mr. Emlyn," said Elsie's cheery voice, "that you have dissuaded Mr. Chillingly from turning Papist. I am sure you have taken time enough to do so."

Mr. Emlyn, Protestant every inch of him, slightly recoiled from Kenelm's side. "Do you meditate turning——" He could not conclude the sentence.

"Be not alarmed, my dear sir. I did but own to Mrs. Braefield that I had paid a visit to Oxford in order to confer with a learned man on a question that puzzled me, and as abstract as that feminine pastime, theology, is nowadays. I cannot convince Mrs. Braefield that Oxford admits other puzzles in life than those which amuse the ladies." Here Kenelm dropped into a chair by the side of Lily.

Lily half turned her back to him.

"Have I offended again?"

Lily shrugged her shoulders slightly and would not answer.

"I suspect, Miss Mordaunt, that among your good qualities, nature has omitted one; the bettermost self within you should replace it."

Lily here abruptly turned to him her front face—the light of the skies was becoming dim, but the evening star shone upon it.

"How! what do you mean?"

"Am I to answer politely or truthfully?"

"Truthfully! Oh, truthfully! What is life without truth?"

"Even though one believes in fairies?"

"Fairies are truthful, in a certain way. But you are not truthful. You were not thinking of fairies when you——"

"When I what?"

"Found fault with me."

"I am not sure of that. But I will translate to you my thoughts, so far as I can read them myself, and to do so I will resort to the fairies. Let us suppose that a fairy has placed her changeling into the cradle of a mortal; that into the cradle she drops all manner of fairy gifts which are not bestowed on mere mortals; but that one mortal attribute she forgets. The changeling grows up, she charms those around her; they humour, and pet, and spoil her. But there arises a moment in which the omission of the one mortal gift is felt by her admirers and friends. Guess what that is."

Lily pondered. "I see what you mean; the reverse of truthfulness, politeness."

"No, not exactly that, though politeness slides into it unawares; it is a very humble quality, a very unpoetic quality; a quality that many dull people possess; and yet without it no fairy can fascinate mortals, when on the face of the fairy settles the first wrinkle. Can you not guess it now?"

"No; you vex me, you provoke me;" and Lily stamped her foot petulantly, as in Kenelm's presence she had stamped it once before. "Speak plainly, I insist."

"Miss Mordaunt, excuse me, I dare not," said Kenelm, rising with a sort of bow one makes to the Queen; and he crossed over to Mrs. Braefield.

Lily remained, still pouting fiercely.

Sir Thomas took the chair Kenelm had vacated.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE hour for parting came. Of all the guests, Sir Thomas alone stayed at the house a guest for the night. Mr. and Mrs. Emlyn had their own carriage. Mrs. Braefield's carriage came to the door for Mrs. Cameron and Lily.

Said Lily, impatiently and discourteously, "Who would not rather walk on such a night?" and she whispered to her aunt.

Mrs. Cameron, listening to the whisper, and obedient to every whim of Lily's, said, "You are too considerate, dear Mrs. Braefield, Lily prefers walking home; there is no chance of rain now."

Kenelm followed the steps of the aunt and niece, and soon overtook them on the brookside.

"A charming night, Mr. Chillingly," said Mrs. Cameron.

"An English summer night; nothing like it in such parts of the world as I have visited. But, alas! of English summer nights there are but few."

"You have travelled much abroad?"

"Much—no, a little; chiefly on foot."

Lily hitherto had not said a word, and had been walking with downcast head. Now she looked up and said, in the mildest and most conciliatory of human voices—

"You have been abroad;" then, with an acquiescence in the manners of the world which to him she had never yet manifested, she added his name, "Mr. Chillingly," and went on, more familiarly. "What a breadth of meaning the word 'abroad' conveys! Away, afar from one's self, from one's everyday life. How I envy you! you have been abroad: so has Lion"—(here drawing herself up)—"I mean my guardian, Mr. Melville."

"Certainly, I have been abroad, but afar from myself—never. It is an old saying—all old sayings are true, most new sayings are false—a man carries his native soil at the sole of his foot."

Here the path somewhat narrowed. Mrs. Cameron went on first, Kenelm and Lily behind; she, of course, on the dry path, he on the dewy grass.

She stopped him. "You are walking in the wet, and with those thin shoes." Lily moved instinctively away from the dry path.

Homely though that speech of Lily's be, and absurd as said by a fragile girl to a gladiator like Kenelm, it lit up a whole world of womanhood—it showed all that undiscoverable land which was hidden to the learned Mr. Emlyn, all that land which an uncomprehended girl seizes and reigns over when she becomes wife and mother.

At that homely speech, and that impulsive movement, Kenelm halted, in a sort of dreaming maze. He turned timidly—"Can you forgive me for my rude words? I presumed to find fault with you."

"And so justly. I have been thinking over all you said, and I feel you were so right; only I still do not quite understand what you meant by the quality for mortals which the fairy did not give to her changeling."

"If I did not dare say it before, I should still less dare to say it now."

"Do." There was no longer the stamp of the foot, no longer the flash from her eyes, no longer the wilfulness which said "I insist;"—"Do;" soothingly, sweetly, imploringly.

Thus pushed to it, Kenelm plucked up courage, and not trusting himself to look at Lily, answered brusquely—

"The quality desirable for men, but more essential to women in proportion as they are fairy-like, though the tritest thing possible, is good temper."

Lily made a sudden bound from his side, and joined her aunt, walking through the wet grass.

When they reached the garden-gate, Kenelm advanced and opened it. Lily passed him by haughtily; they gained the cottage-door.

"I don't ask you in at this hour," said Mrs. Cameron. "It would be but a false compliment."

Kenelm bowed and retreated. Lily left her aunt's side, and came towards him, extending her hand.

"I shall consider your words, Mr. Chillingly," she said, with a strangely majestic air. "At present I think you are not right. I am not ill-tempered; but——" here she paused, and then added with a loftiness of mien which, had she not been so exquisitely pretty, would have been rudeness—"in any case I forgive you."

CHAPTER IX.

THERE were a good many pretty villas in the outskirts of Moleswich, and the owners of them were generally well off, and yet there was little of what is called visiting society—owing perhaps to the fact that there not being among these proprietors any persons belonging to what is commonly called “the aristocratic class,” there was a vast deal of aristocratic pretension. The family of Mr. A——, who had enriched himself as a stock-jobber, turned up its nose at the family of Mr. B——, who had enriched himself still more as a linendraper, while the family of Mr. B—— showed a very cold shoulder to the family of Mr. C——, who had become richer than either of them as a pawnbroker, and whose wife wore diamonds, but dropped her h’s. England would be a community so aristocratic that there would be no living in it, if one could exterminate what is now called “aristocracy.” The Braefields were the only persons who really drew together the antagonistic atoms of the Moleswich society, partly because they were acknowledged to be the first persons there, in right not only of old settlement (the Braefields had held Braefieldville for four generations), but of the wealth derived from those departments of commercial enterprise which are recognised as the highest, and of an establishment considered to be the most elegant in the neighbourhood; principally because Elsie, while exceedingly genial and cheerful in temper, had a certain power of will (as her runaway folly had manifested), and when she got people together compelled them to be civil to each other. She had commenced this gracious career by inaugurating children’s parties, and when the children became friends the parents necessarily grew closer together. Still her task had only recently begun, and its effects were not in full operation. Thus, though it became known at Moleswich that a young gentleman, the heir to a baronetcy and a high estate, was sojourning at Cromwell Lodge, no overtures were made to him on the part of the A’s, B’s, and C’s. The vicar, who called on Kenelm the day after the dinner at Braefieldville,

explained to him the social conditions of the place. "You understand," said he, "that it will be from no want of courtesy on the part of my neighbours if they do not offer you any relief from the pleasures of solitude. It will be simply because they are shy, not because they are uncivil. And, it is this consideration that makes me, at the risk of seeming too forward, entreat you to look into the vicarage any morning or evening on which you feel tired of your own company—suppose you drink tea with us this evening—you will find a young lady whose heart you have already won."

"Whose heart I have won!" faltered Kenelm, and the warm blood rushed to his cheek.

"But," continued the vicar, smiling, "she has no matrimonial designs on you at present. She is only twelve years old—my little girl Clemmy."

"Clemmy!—she is your daughter? I did not know that. I very gratefully accept your invitation."

"I must not keep you longer from your amusement. The sky is just clouded enough for sport. What fly do you use?"

"To say truth, I doubt if the stream has much to tempt me in the way of trout, and I prefer rambling about the lanes and by-paths to

"The noiseless angler's solitary stand."

I am an indefatigable walker, and the home scenery round the place has many charms for me. Besides," added Kenelm, feeling conscious that he ought to find some more plausible excuse than the charms of home scenery for locating himself long in Cromwell Lodge—"besides—I intend to devote myself a good deal to reading. I have been very idle of late, and the solitude of this place must be favourable to study."

"You are not intended, I presume, for any of the learned professions?"

"The learned professions," replied Kenelm, "is an invidious form of speech that we are doing our best to eradicate from the language. All professions nowadays are to have much about the same amount of learning. The learning of the military profession is to be levelled upwards—the learning of

the scholastic to be levelled downwards. Cabinet ministers sneer at the uses of Greek and Latin. And even such masculine studies as Law and Medicine are to be adapted to the measurements of taste and propriety in colleges for young ladies. No, I am not intended for any profession; but still an ignorant man like myself may not be the worse for a little book-reading now and then."

"You seem to be badly provided with books here," said the vicar, glancing round the room, in which, on a table in the corner, lay half-a-dozen old-looking volumes, evidently belonging not to the lodger but to the landlord. "But, as I before said, my library is at your service. What branch of reading do you prefer?"

Kenelm was, and looked, puzzled. But after a pause he answered:

"The more remote it be from the present day, the better for me. You said your collection was rich in mediæval literature. But the Middle Ages are so copied by the modern Goths, that I might as well read translations of Chaucer, or take lodgings in Wardour Street. If you have any books about the manners and habits of those who, according to the newest idea in science, were our semi-human progenitors in the transition state between a marine animal and a gorilla, I should be very much edified by the loan."

"Alas," said Mr. Emlyn, laughing, "no such books have been left to us."

"No such books? You must be mistaken. There must be plenty of them somewhere. I grant all the wonderful powers of invention bestowed on the creators of poetic romance; still not the sovereign masters in that realm of literature—not Scott, not Cervantes, not Goethe, not even Shakespeare—could have presumed to rebuild the past without such materials as they found in the books that record it. And though I, no less cheerfully, grant that we have now living among us a creator of poetic romance immeasurably more inventive than they—appealing to our credulity in portents the most monstrous, with a charm of style the most conversationally familiar—still I cannot corceive that even that unrivalled romance-writer can

so bewitch our understandings as to make us believe, that, if Miss Mordaunt's cat dislikes to wet her feet, it is probably because in the pre-historic age her ancestors lived in the dry country of Egypt; or that when some lofty orator, a Pitt or a Gladstone, rebuts with a polished smile which reveals his canine teeth the rude assault of an opponent, he betrays his descent from a 'semi-human progenitor' who was accustomed to snap at his enemy. Surely—surely there must be some books still extant written by philosophers before the birth of Adam, in which there is authority, even though but in mythic fable, for such poetic inventions. Surely—surely some early chroniclers must depose that they saw, saw with their own eyes, the great gorillas who scratched off their hairy coverings to please the eyes of the young ladies of their species, and that they noted the gradual metamorphosis of one animal into another. For, if you tell me that this illustrious romance-writer is but a cautious man of science, and that we must accept his inventions according to the sober laws of evidence and fact, there is not the most incredible ghost story which does not better satisfy the common sense of a sceptic. However, if you have no such books, lend me the most unphilosophical you possess—on magic, for instance—the philosopher's stone——"

"I have some of them," said the vicar, laughing; "you shall choose for yourself."

"If you are going homeward, let me accompany you part of the way—I don't yet know where the church and the vicarage are, and I ought to know before I come in the evening."

Kenelm and the vicar walked side by side, very sociably, across the bridge and on the side of the rivulet on which stood Mrs. Cameron's cottage. As they skirted the garden pale at the rear of the cottage, Kenelm suddenly stopped in the middle of some sentence which had interested Mr. Emlyn, and as suddenly arrested his steps on the turf that bordered the lane. A little before him stood an old peasant woman, with whom Lily, on the opposite side of the garden pale, was conversing. Mr. Emlyn did not at first see what Kenelm saw;

turning round rather to gaze on his companion, surprised by his abrupt halt and silence. The girl put a small basket into the old woman's hand, who then dropped a low curtsey, and uttered low a "God bless you." Low though it was, Kenelm overheard it, and said abstractedly to Mr. Emlyn, "Is there a greater link between this life and the next than God's blessing on the young, breathed from the lips of the old?"

CHAPTER X.

"AND how is your good man, Mrs. Haley?" said the vicar, who had now reached the spot on which the old woman stood—with Lily's fair face still bended down to her—while Kenelm slowly followed him.

"Thank you kindly, sir, he is better—out of his bed now. The young lady has done him a power of good——"

"Hush!" said Lily, colouring. "Make haste home now; you must not keep him waiting for his dinner."

The old woman again curtseyed, and went off at a brisk pace.

"Do you know, Mr. Chillingly," said Mr. Emlyn, "that Miss Mordaunt is the best doctor in the place? Though if she goes on making so many cures she will find the number of her patients rather burthensome."

"It was only the other day," said Lily, "that you scolded me for the best cure I have yet made."

"I?—Oh! I remember; you led that silly child Madge to believe that there was a fairy charm in the arrowroot you sent her. Own you deserved a scolding there."

"No, I did not. I dressed the arrowroot, and am I not Fairy? I have just got such a pretty note from Clemmy, Mr. Emlyn, asking me to come up this evening and see her new magic-lantern. Will you tell her to expect me? And—mind—no scolding."

"And all magic?" said Mr. Emlyn; "be it so."

Lily and Kenelm had not hitherto exchanged a word. She

had replied with a grave inclination of her head to his silent bow. But now she turned to him shyly and said, "I suppose you have been fishing all the morning?"

"No; the fishes hereabout are under the protection of a Fairy—whom I dare not displease."

Lily's face brightened, and she extended her hand to him over the palings. "Good day; I hear aunty's voice—those dreadful French verbs!"

She disappeared among the shrubs, amid which they heard the thrill of her fresh young voice singing to herself.

"That child has a heart of gold," said Mr. Emlyn, as the two men walked on. "I did not exaggerate when I said she was the best doctor in the place. I believe the poor really do believe that she is a fairy. Of course we send from the vicarage to our ailing parishioners who require it food and wine; but it never seems to do them the good that her little dishes made by her own tiny hands do; and I don't know if you noticed the basket that old woman took away—Miss Lily taught Will Somers to make the prettiest little baskets; and she puts her jellies or other savouries into dainty porcelain gallipots nicely fitted into the baskets, which she trims with ribbons. It is the look of the thing that tempts the appetite of the invalids, and certainly the child may well be called Fairy at present; but I wish Mrs. Cameron would attend a little more strictly to her education. She can't be a fairy for ever."

Kenelm sighed, but made no answer.

Mr. Emlyn then turned the conversation to erudite subjects, and so they came in sight of the town, when the vicar stopped and pointed towards the church, of which the spire rose a little to the left, with two aged yew-trees half-shadowing the burial-ground, and in the rear a glimpse of the vicarage seen amid the shrubs of its garden ground.

"You will know your way now," said the vicar; "excuse me if I quit you, I have a few visits to make; among others, to poor Haley, husband to the old woman you saw. I read to him a chapter in the Bible every day yet still I fancy that he believes in fairy charms."

"Better believe too much, than too little," said Kenelm ; and he turned aside into the village and spent half-an-hour with Will, looking at the pretty baskets Lily had taught Will to make. Then, as he went slowly homeward, he turned aside into the churchyard.

The church, built in the thirteenth century, was not large, but it probably sufficed for its congregation, since it betrayed no signs of modern addition ; restoration or repair it needed not. The centuries had but mellowed the tints of its solid walls, as little injured by the huge ivy stems that shot forth their aspiring leaves to the very summit of the stately tower, as by the slender roses which had been trained to climb up a foot or so of the massive buttresses. The site of the burial-ground was unusually picturesque : sheltered towards the north by a rising ground clothed with woods, sloping down at the south towards the glebe pasture-grounds through which ran the brooklet, sufficiently near for its brawling gurgle to be heard on a still day. Kenelm sat himself on an antique tomb, which was evidently appropriated to some one of higher than common rank in bygone days, but on which the sculpture was wholly obliterated.

The stillness and solitude of the place had their charms for his meditative temperament ; and he remained there long, forgetful of time, and scarcely hearing the boom of the clock that warned him of its lapse.

When suddenly, a shadow—the shadow of a human form—fell on the grass on which his eyes dreamily rested. He looked up with a start, and beheld Lily standing before him mute and still. Her image was so present in his thoughts at the moment that he felt a thrill of awe, as if the thoughts had conjured up her apparition. She was the first to speak.

"You here, too ?" she said very softly, almost whisperingly.

"Too !" echoed Kenelm, rising ; "too ! 'Tis no wonder that I, a stranger to the place, should find my steps attracted towards its most venerable building. Even the most careless traveller, halting at some remote abodes of the living, turns aside to gaze on the burial-ground of the dead. But my surprise is that you, Miss Mordaunt, should be attracted towards the same spot."

"It is my favourite spot," said Lily, "and always has been. I have sat many an hour on that tombstone. It is strange to think that no one knows who sleeps beneath it. The *Guide Book to Moleswich*, though it gives the history of the church from the reign in which it was first built, can only venture a guess that this tomb, the grandest and oldest in the burial-ground, is tenanted by some member of a family named Montfichet, that was once very powerful in the county, and has become extinct since the reign of Henry VI. But," added Lily, "there is not a letter of the name Montfichet left. I found out more than any one else has done—I learned black-letter on purpose; look here," and she pointed to a small spot in which the moss had been removed. "Do you see those figures, are they not XVIII? and look again, in what was once the line above the figures, ELE. It must have been an Eleanor, who died at the age of eighteen——"

"I rather think it more probable that the figures refer to the date of the death 1318 perhaps; and so far as I can decipher black-letter, which is more in my father's line than mine, I think it is A L, not E L, and that it seems as if there had been a letter between L and the second E, which is now effaced. The tomb itself is not likely to belong to any powerful family then resident at the place. Their monuments, according to usage, would have been within the church; probably in their own mortuary chapel."

"Don't try to destroy my fancy," said Lily, shaking her head; "you cannot succeed, I know *her* history too well. She was young, and some one loved her, and built over her the finest tomb he could afford; and see how long the epitaph must have been! how much it must have spoken in her praise, and of his grief. And then he went his way, and the tomb was neglected, and her fate forgotten."

"My dear Miss Mordaunt, this is indeed a wild romance to spin out of so slender a thread. But even if true, there is no reason to think that a life is forgotten though a tomb be neglected."

"Perhaps not," said Lily, thoughtfully. "But when I am dead, if I can look down, I think it would please me to

see my grave not neglected by those who had loved me once."

She moved from him as she said this, and went to a little mound that seemed not long since raised; there was a simple cross at the head and a narrow border of flowers round it. Lily knelt beside the flowers and pulled out a stray weed. Then she rose, and said to Kenelm, who had followed, and now stood beside her—

"She was the little grandchild of poor old Mrs. Hales. I could not cure her, though I tried hard: she was so fond of me, and died in my arms. No, let me not say 'died'—surely there is no such thing as dying. 'Tis but a change of life—

" 'Less than the void between two waves of air,
The space between existence and a soul.' "

"Whose lines are those?" asked Kenelm.

"I don't know; I learnt them from Lion. Don't you believe them to be true?"

"Yes. But the truth does not render the thought of quitting this scene of life for another more pleasing to most of us. See how soft and gentle and bright is all that living summer land beyond; let us find subject for talk from that, not from the graveyard on which we stand."

"But is there not a summer land fairer than that we see now; and which we do see, as in a dream, best when we take subjects of talk from the graveyard?" Without waiting for a reply, Lily went on. "I planted these flowers; Mr. Emlyn was angry with me; he said it was 'Popish.' But he had not the heart to have them taken up; I come here very often to see to them. Do you think it wrong? Poor little Nell! she was so fond of flowers. And the Eleanor in the great tomb, she too perhaps knew some one who called her Nell; but there are no flowers round her tomb. Poor Eleanor!"

She took the nosegay she wore on her bosom, and as she repassed the tomb laid it on the mouldering stone.

CHAPTER XI.

THEY quitted the burial-ground, taking their way to Grasmere. Kenelm walked by Lily's side; not a word passed between them till they came in sight of the cottage.

Then Lily stopped abruptly, and lifting towards him her charming face, said—

"I told you I would think over what you said to me last night. I have done so, and feel I can thank you honestly. You were very kind; I never before thought that I had a bad temper, no one ever told me so. But I see now what you mean—sometimes I feel very quickly, and then I show it. But how did I show it to you, Mr. Chillingly?"

"Did you not turn your back to me when I seated myself next you in Mrs. Braefield's garden, vouchsafing me no reply when I asked if I had offended?"

Lily's face became bathed in blushes, and her voice faltered, as she answered—

"I was not offended, I was not in a bad temper then; it was worse than that."

"Worse—what could it possibly be?"

"I am afraid it was envy."

"Envy of what—of whom?"

"I don't know how to explain; after all, I fear aunty is right, and the fairy tales put very silly, very naughty thoughts into one's head. When Cinderella's sisters went to the king's ball, and Cinderella was left alone, did not she long to go too? Did not she envy her sister?"

"Ah! I understand now—Sir Charles spoke of the Court Ball."

"And you were there talking with handsome ladies—and—oh! I was so foolish and felt sore."

"You, who when we first met wondered how people who could live in the country preferred to live in towns, do then sometimes contradict yourself, and sigh for the great world that lies beyond these quiet water banks. You feel that you have youth and beauty, and wish to be admired!"

"It is not that **exactly**," said Lily, with a perplexed look in her ingenuous countenance, "and in my better moments, when the 'bettermost self' comes forth, I know that I am not made for the great world you speak of. But you see ——" Here she paused again, and as they had now entered the garden, dropped wearily on a bench beside the path. Kenelm seated himself there too, waiting for her to finish her broken sentence.

"You see," she continued, looking down embarrassed, and describing vague circles on the gravel with her fairy-like foot, "that at home, ever since I can remember, they have treated me as if,—well as if I were—what shall I say?—the child of one of your great ladies. Even Lion, who is so noble, so grand, seemed to think when I was a mere infant that I was a little queen; once when I told a fib he did not scold me, but I never saw him look so sad and so angry as when he said, 'Never again forget that you are a lady.' And, but I tire you——"

"Tire me, indeed! go on."

"No, I have said enough to explain why I have at times proud thoughts, and vain thoughts: and why, for instance, I said to myself: 'Perhaps my place of right is among those fine ladies whom he'—but it is all over now." She rose hastily with a pretty laugh, and bounded towards Mrs. Cameron, who was walking slowly along the lawn with a book in her hand.

CHAPTER XII.

It was a very merry party at the vicarage that evening.

Lily had not been prepared to meet Kenelm there, and her face brightened wonderfully as at her entrance he turned from the bookshelves to which Mr. Emlyn was directing his attention. But instead of meeting his advance, she darted off to the lawn, where Clemmy and several other children greeted her with a joyous shout.

"Not acquainted with Maclean's Juvenal?" said the reverend scholar; "you will be greatly pleased with it—here it is—a posthumous work, edited by George Long. I can lend you Munro's Lucretius, '69. Aha! we have some scholars yet to pit against the Germans."

"I am heartily glad to hear it," said Kenelm. "It will be a long time before they will ever wish to rival us in that game which Miss Clemmy is now forming on the lawn, and in which England has recently acquired a European reputation."

"I don't take you. What game?"

"Puss in the Corner. With your leave I will look out and see whether it be a winning game for puss—in the long-run." Kenelm joined the children, amidst whom Lily seemed not the least childlike. Resisting all overtures from Clemmy to join their play, he seated himself on a sloping bank at a little distance—an idle looker-on. His eye followed Lily's nimble movements, his ear drank in the music of her joyous laugh. Could that be the same girl whom he had seen tending the flower-bed amid the gravestones? Mrs. Emlyn came across the lawn and joined him, seating herself also on the bank. Mrs. Emlyn was an exceedingly clever woman; nevertheless she was not formidable—on the contrary, pleasing; and though the ladies in the neighbourhood said 'she talked like a book,' the easy gentleness of her voice carried off that offence.

"I suppose, Mr. Chillingly," said she, "I ought to apologise for my husband's invitation to what must seem to you so frivolous an entertainment as a child's party. But when Mr. Emlyn asked you to come to us this evening, he was not aware that Clemmy had also invited her young friends. He had looked forward to rational conversation with you on his own favourite studies."

"It is not so long since I left school, but that I prefer a half holiday to lessons, even from a tutor so pleasant as Mr. Emlyn—

"Ah, happy years—once more who would not be a boy!"

"Nay," said Mrs. Emlyn, with a grave smile. "Who that had started so fairly as Mr. Chillingly in the career of man would wish to go back and resume a place among boys?"

"But, my dear Mrs. Emlyn, the line I quoted was wrung from the heart of a man who had already outstripped all rivals in the raceground he had chosen and who at that moment was in the very Maytime of youth and of fame. And if such a man at such an epoch in his career could sigh to 'be once more a boy,' it must have been when he was thinking of the boy's half holiday, and recoiling from the task work he was condemned to learn as man."

"The line you quote is, I think, from *Childe Harold*, and surely you would not apply to mankind in general the sentiment of a poet so peculiarly self-reflecting (if I may use that expression), and in whom sentiment is often so morbid."

"You are right, Mrs. Emlyn," said Kenelm, ingenuously. "Still a boy's half holiday is a very happy thing; and among mankind in general there must be many who would be glad to have it back again. Mr. Emlyn himself, I should think."

"Mr. Emlyn has his half holiday now. Do you not see him standing just outside the window? Do you not hear him laughing? He is a child again in the mirth of his children. I hope you will stay some time in the neighbourhood; I am sure you and he will like each other. And it is such a rare delight to him to get a scholar like yourself to talk to."

"Pardon me, I am not a scholar—a very noble title that, and not to be given to a lazy trifler on the surface of booklore like myself."

"You are too modest. My husband has a copy of your Cambridge prize verses, and says 'the Latinity of them is quite beautiful.' I quote his very words."

"Latin verse-making is a mere knack, little more than a proof that one had an elegant scholar for one's tutor, as I certainly had. But it is by special grace that a real scholar can send forth another real scholar, and a Kennedy produce a Munro. But to return to the more interesting question of half holidays; I declare that Clemmy is leading off your husband in triumph. He is actually going to be Puss in the Corner."

"When you know more of Charles—I mean my husband—you will discover that his whole life is more or less of a holiday. Perhaps because he is not what you accuse yourself of being—

he is not lazy : he never wishes to be a boy once more ; and taskwork itself is holiday to him. He enjoys shutting himself up in his study and reading—he enjoys a walk with the children—he enjoys visiting the poor—he enjoys his duties as a clergyman. And though I am not always contented for him, though I think he should have had those honours in his profession which have been lavished on men with less ability and less learning, yet he is never discontented himself. Shall I tell you his secret ?”

“Do.”

“He is a *Thanks-giving Man*. You, too, must have much to thank God for, Mr. Chillingly ; and in thanksgiving to God does there not blend usefulness to man, and such sense of pastime in the usefulness as makes each day a holiday ?”

Kenelm looked up into the quiet face of this obscure pastor's wife with a startled expression in his own.

“I see, ma'am,” said he, “that you have devoted much thought to the study of the æsthetical philosophy as expounded by German thinkers, whom it is rather difficult to understand.”

“I, Mr. Chillingly—good gracious! No! What do you mean by your æsthetical philosophy ?”

“According to æsthetics, I believe man arrives at his highest state of moral excellence when labour and duty lose all the harshness of effort—when they become the impulse and habit of life ; when as the essential attributes of the beautiful, they are, like beauty, enjoyed as pleasure ; and thus, as you expressed, each day becomes a holiday. A lovely doctrine, not perhaps so lofty as that of the Stoics, but more bewitching. Only, very few of us can practically merge our cares and our worries into so serene an atmosphere.”

“Some do so without knowing anything of æsthetics and with no pretence to be Stoics ; but, then, they are Christians.”

“There are some such Christians, no doubt, but they are rarely to be met with. Take Christendom altogether, and it appears to comprise the most agitated population in the world ; the population in which there is the greatest grumbling as to the quantity of labour to be done, the loudest complaints that

duty instead of a pleasure is a very hard and disagreeable struggle, and in which holidays are fewest and the moral atmosphere least serene. Perhaps," added Kenelm, with a deeper shade of thought on his brow, "it is this perpetual consciousness of struggle ; this difficulty in merging toil into ease, or stern duty into placid enjoyment ; this refusal to ascend for one's self into the calm of an air aloof from the cloud which darkens, and the hailstorm which beats upon, the fellow-men we leave below,—that makes the troubled life of Christendom dearer to Heaven, and more conducive to Heaven's design in rendering earth the wrestling-ground and not the resting-place of man, than is that of the Brahmin, ever seeking to abstract himself from the Christian's conflicts of action and desire, and to carry into its extremest practice the æsthetic theory, of basking undisturbed in the contemplation of the most absolute beauty human thought can reflect from its idea of divine good !"

Whatever Mrs. Emlyn might have said in reply was interrupted by the rush of the children towards her ; they were tired of play, and eager for tea and the magic lantern.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE room is duly obscured and the white sheet attached to the wall ; the children are seated, hushed, and awe-stricken. And Kenelm is placed next to Lily.

The tritest things in our mortal experience are among the most mysterious. There is more mystery in the growth of a blade of grass than there is in the wizard's mirror or the feats of a spirit medium. Most of us have known the attraction that draws one human being to another, and makes it so exquisite a happiness to sit quiet and mute by another's side ; which stills for the moment the busiest thoughts in our brain, the most turbulent desires in our heart, and renders us but conscious of a present ineffable bliss. Most of us have known that. But who has ever been satisfied with any metaphysical account

of its why or wherefore? We can but say it is love, and love at that earlier section of its history which has not yet escaped from romance: but by what process that other person has become singled out of the whole universe to attain such special power over one, is a problem that, though many have attempted to solve it, has never attained to solution. In the dim light of the room Kenelm could only distinguish the outlines of Lily's delicate face, but at each new surprise in the show, the face intuitively turned to his, and once, when the terrible image of a sheeted ghost, pursuing a guilty man, passed along the wall, she drew closer to him in her childish fright, and by an involuntary innocent movement laid her hand on his. He detained it tenderly, but, alas! it was withdrawn the next moment; the ghost was succeeded by a couple of dancing dogs. And Lily's ready laugh—partly at the dogs, partly at her own previous alarm—vexed Kenelm's ear. He wished there had been a succession of ghosts, each more appalling than the last.

The entertainment was over, and after a slight refreshment of cakes and wine-and-water the party broke up; the children-visitors went away attended by servant-maids who had come for them. Mrs. Cameron and Lily were to walk home on foot.

"It is a lovely night, Mrs. Cameron," said Mr. Emlyn, "and I will attend you to your gate."

"Permit me also," said Kenelm.

"Ay," said the vicar, "it is your own way to Cromwell Lodge."

The path led them through the churchyard as the nearest approach to the brookside. The moonbeams shimmered through the yew-trees and rested on the old tomb—playing, as it were, round the flowers which Lily's hand had, that day, dropped upon its stone. She was walking beside Kenelm—the elder two a few paces in front.

"How silly I was," said she, "to be so frightened at the false ghost! I don't think a real one would frighten me, at least if seen here, in this loving moonlight, and on God's ground!"

"Ghosts, were they permitted to appear except in a magic-

lantern, could not harm the innocent. And I wonder why the idea of their apparition should always have been associated with such phantasies of horror, especially by sinless children, who have the least reason to dread them."

"Oh, that is true," cried Lily; "but even when we are grown up there must be times in which we should so long to see a ghost, and feel what a comfort, what a joy it would be."

"I understand you. If some one very dear to us had vanished from our life; if we felt the anguish of the separation so intensely as to efface the thought that life, as you said so well, 'never dies;' well, yes, then I can conceive that the mourner would yearn to have a glimpse of the vanished one, were it but to ask the sole and only question he could desire to put: 'Art thou happy? May I hope that we shall meet again, never to part—never?'"

Kenelm's voice trembled as he spoke, tears stood in his eyes. A melancholy — vague, unaccountable, overpowering — passed across his heart, as the shadow of some dark-winged bird passes over a quiet stream.

"You have never yet felt this?" asked Lily doubtfully, in a soft voice, full of tender pity, stopping short and looking into his face.

"I? No. I have never yet lost one whom I so loved and so yearned to see again. I was but thinking that such losses may befall us all ere we too vanish out of sight."

"Lily!" called forth Mrs. Cameron, halting at the gate of the burial-ground.

"Yes, auntie?"

"Mr. Emlyn wants to know how far you have got in *Numa Pompilius*. Come and answer for yourself."

"Oh, those tiresome grown-up people!" whispered Lily, petulantly, to Kenelm. "I do like Mr. Emlyn; he is one of the very best of men. But still he is grown up, and his *Numa Pompilius* is so stupid."

"My first French lesson-book. No, it is not stupid. Read on. It has hints of the prettiest fairy tale I know, and of the fairy in especial who bewitched my fancies as a boy."

By this time they had gained the gate of the burial-ground.

"What fairy tale? what fairy?" asked Lily, speaking quickly.

"She was a fairy, though in heathen language she is called a nymph—Egeria. She was the link between men and gods to him she loved; she belongs to the race of gods. True, she, too, may vanish, but she can never die."

"Well, Miss Lily," said the vicar, "and how far in the book I lent you—'Numa Pompilius.'"

"Ask me this day next week."

"I will; but mind you are to translate as you go on. I must see the translation."

"Very well. I will do my best," answered Lily meekly.

Lily now walked by the vicar's side, and Kenelm by Mrs. Cameron's, till they reached Grasmere.

"I will go on with you to the bridge, Mr. Chillingly," said the vicar when the ladies had disappeared within their garden.

"We had little time to look over my books, and, by the by, I hope you at least took the Juvenal."

"No, Mr. Emlyn; who can quit your house with an inclination for satire? I must come some morning and select a volume from those works which give pleasant views of life and bequeath favourable impressions of mankind. Your wife, with whom I have had an interesting conversation upon the principles of æsthetical philosophy——"

"My wife—Charlotte! She knows nothing about æsthetical philosophy."

"She calls it by another name, but she understands it well enough to illustrate the principles by example. She tells me that labour and duty are so taken up by you

" 'In den heitern Regionen
Wo die reinen Formen wohnen,'

that they become joy and beauty—is it so?"

"I am sure that Charlotte never said anything half so poetical. But, in plain words, the days pass with me very happily. I should be ungrateful if I were not happy. Heaven has bestowed on me so many sources of love—wife, children, books, and the calling which, when one quits one's own threshold, carries love along with it into the world beyond. A small

world in itself—only a parish—but then my calling links it with infinity.”

“I see; it is from the sources of love that you draw the supplies for happiness.”

“Surely; without love one may be good, but one could scarcely be happy. No one can dream of a Heaven except as the abode of love. What writer is it who says, ‘How well the human heart was understood by him who first called God by the name of Father’?”

“I do not remember, but it is beautifully said. You evidently do not subscribe to the arguments in Decimus Roach’s *Approach to the Angels*.”

“Ah, Mr. Chillingly! your words teach me how lacerated a man’s happiness may be if he does not keep the claws of vanity closely pared. I actually feel a keen pang when you speak to me of that eloquent panegyric on celibacy, ignorant that the only thing I ever published which I fancied was not without esteem by intellectual readers is a Reply to *The Approach to the Angels*—a youthful book, written in the first year of my marriage. But it obtained success: I have just revised the tenth edition of it.”

“That is the book I will select from your library. You will be pleased to hear that Mr. Roach, whom I saw at Oxford a few days ago, recants his opinions, and, at the age of fifty, is about to be married—he begs me to add, ‘not for his own personal satisfaction.’”

“Going to be married!—Decimus Roach! I thought my Reply would convince him at last.”

“I shall look to your Reply to remove some lingering doubts in my own mind.”

“Doubts in favour of celibacy?”

“Well, if not for laymen, perhaps for a priesthood.”

“The most forcible part of my Reply is on that head: read it attentively. I think that, of all sections of mankind, the clergy are those to whom, not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the community, marriage should be most commended. Why, sir,” continued the vicar, warming up into oratorical enthusiasm, “are you not aware that there are no

liomes in England from which men who have served and adorned their country have issued forth in such prodigal numbers as those of the clergy of our Church? What other class can produce a list so crowded with eminent names as we can boast in the sons we have reared and sent forth into the world? How many statesmen, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, physicians, authors, men of science, have been the sons of us village pastors? Naturally—for with us they receive careful education; they acquire of necessity the simple tastes and disciplined habits which lead to industry and perseverance; and, for the most part, they carry with them throughout life a purer moral code, a more systematic reverence for things and thoughts religious associated with their earliest images of affection and respect, than can be expected from the sons of laymen, whose parents are wholly temporal and worldly. Sir, I maintain that this is a cogent argument, to be considered well by the nation, not only in favour of a married clergy—for, on that score, a million of Roaches could not convert public opinion in this country—but in favour of the Church, the Established Church, which has been so fertile a nursery of illustrious laymen; and I have often thought that one main and undetected cause of the lower tone of morality, public and private, of the greater corruption of manners, of the more prevalent scorn of religion which we see, for instance, in a country so civilised as France, is, that its clergy can train no sons to carry into the contests of earth the steadfast belief in accountability to Heaven."

"I thank you with a full heart," said Kenelm. "I shall ponder well over all that you have so earnestly said. I am already disposed to give up all lingering crotchets as to a bachelor clergy; but, as a layman, I fear that I shall never attain to the purified philanthropy of Mr. Decimus Roach, and, if ever I do marry, it will be very much for my personal satisfaction."

Mr. Emlyn laughed good-humouredly, and, as they had now reached the bridge, shook hands with Kenelm, and walked homewards, along the brook-side and through the burial-ground, with the alert step and the uplifted head of a man who has joy in life and admits of no fear in death.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR the next two weeks or so Kenelm and Lily met, not indeed so often as the reader might suppose, but still frequently; five times at Mrs. Braefield's, once again at the Vicarage, and twice when Kenelm had called at Grasmere; and, being invited to stay to tea at one of those visits, he stayed the whole evening. Kenelm was more and more fascinated in proportion as he saw more and more of a creature so exquisitely strange to his experience. She was to him not only a poem, but a poem in the Sibylline Books—enigmatical, perplexing conjecture, and somehow or other mysteriously blending its interest with visions of the future.

Lily was indeed an enchanting combination of opposites rarely blended into harmony. Her ignorance of much that girls know before they number half her years, was so relieved by candid, innocent simplicity: so adorned by pretty fancies and sweet beliefs; and so contrasted and lit up by gleams of a knowledge that the young ladies we call well educated seldom exhibit—knowledge derived from quick observation of external nature, and impressionable susceptibility to its varying and subtle beauties. This knowledge had been perhaps first instilled, and subsequently nourished, by such poetry as she had not only learned by heart, but taken up as inseparable from the healthful circulation of her thoughts; not the poetry of our own day—most young ladies know enough of that—but selected fragments from the verse of old, most of them from poets now little read by the young of either sex, poets dear to spirits like Coleridge or Charles Lamb. None of them, however, so dear to her as the solemn melodies of Milton. Much of such poetry she had never read in books; it had been taught her in childhood by her guardian the painter. And with all this imperfect, desultory culture, there was such dainty refinement in her every look and gesture, and such deep woman-tenderness of heart. Since Kenelm had commended *Numa Pompilius* to her study, she had taken very lovingly to that old-fashioned romance, and was fond of

talking to him about Egeria as of a creature who had really existed.

But what was the effect that he—the first man of years correspondent to her own with whom she had ever familiarly conversed—what was the effect that Kenelm Chillingly produced on the mind and the heart of Lily?

This was, after all, the question that puzzled him the most—not without reason: it might have puzzled the shrewdest bystander. The artless candour with which she manifested her liking to him was at variance with the ordinary character of maiden love; it seemed more the fondness of a child for a favourite brother. And it was this uncertainty that, in his own thoughts, justified Kenelm for lingering on, and believing that it was necessary to win, or at least to learn more of, her secret heart before he could venture to disclose his own. He did not flatter himself with the pleasing fear that he might be endangering her happiness; it was only his own that was risked. Then, in all those meetings, all those conversations to themselves there had passed none of the words which commit our destiny to the will of another. If in the man's eyes love would force its way, Lily's frank, innocent gaze chilled it back again to its inward cell. Joyously as she would spring forward to meet him, there was no tell-tale blush on her cheek, no self-betraying tremor in her clear, sweet-toned voice. No; there had not yet been a moment when he could say to himself, "She loves me." Often he said to himself, "She knows not yet what love is."

In the intervals of time not passed in Lily's society, Kenelm would take long rambles with Mr. Emlyn, or saunter into Mrs. Braefield's drawing-room. For the former he conceived a more cordial sentiment of friendship than he entertained for any man of his own age—a friendship that admitted the noble elements of admiration and respect.

Charles Emlyn was one of those characters in which the colours appear pale unless the light be brought very close to them, and then each tint seems to change into a warmer and richer one. The manner which, at first, you would call merely gentle, becomes unaffectedly genial; the mind you at first

might term inert, though well-informed, you now acknowledge to be full of disciplined vigour. Emlyn was not, however, without his little amiable foibles; and it was, perhaps, these that made him lovable. He was a great believer in human goodness, and very easily imposed upon by cunning appeals to "his well-known benevolence." He was disposed to overrate the excellence of all that he once took to his heart. He thought he had the best wife in the world, the best children, the best servants, the best beehive, the best pony, and the best house-dog. His parish was the most virtuous, his church the most picturesque, his vicarage the prettiest, certainly, in the whole shire—perhaps, in the whole kingdom. Probably it was this philosophy of optimism which contributed to lift him into the serene realm of æsthetic joy.

He was not without his dislikes as well as likings. Though a liberal Churchman towards Protestant dissenters, he cherished the *odium theologicum* for all that savoured of Popery. Perhaps there was another cause for this besides the purely theological one. Early in life a young sister of his had been, to use his phrase, "secretly entrapped" into conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, and had since entered a convent. His affections had been deeply wounded by this loss to the range of them. Mr. Emlyn had also his little infirmities of self-esteem rather than of vanity. Though he had seen very little of any world beyond that of his parish, he piqued himself on his knowledge of human nature and of practical affairs in general. Certainly no man had read more about them, especially in the books of the ancient classics. Perhaps it was owing to this that he so little understood Lily—a character to which the ancient classics afforded no counterpart nor clue; and perhaps it was this also that made Lily think him "so terribly grown up." Thus, despite his mild good-nature, she did not get on very well with him.

The society of this amiable scholar pleased Kenelm the more, because the scholar evidently had not the remotest idea that Kenelm's sojourn at Cromwell Lodge was influenced by the vicinity to Grasmere. Mr. Emlyn was sure that he knew human nature, and practical affairs in general, too well to

suppose that the heir to a rich baronet could dream of taking for wife a girl without fortune or rank, the orphan ward of a low-born artist only just struggling into reputation; or, indeed, that a Cambridge prizeman, who had evidently read much on grave and dry subjects, and who had no less evidently seen a great deal of polished society, could find any other attraction in a very imperfectly-educated girl, who tamed butterflies and knew no more than they did of fashionable life, than Mr. Emlyn himself felt in the presence of a pretty wayward innocent child—the companion and friend of his Clemmy.

Mrs. Braefield was more discerning; but she had a good deal of tact, and did not as yet scare Kenelm away from her house by letting him see how much she had discerned. She would not even tell her husband, who, absent from the place on most mornings, was too absorbed in the cares of his own business to interest himself much in the affairs of others.

Now Elsie, being still of a romantic turn of mind, had taken it into her head that Lily Mordaunt, if not actually the princess to be found in poetic dramas whose rank was for a while kept concealed, was yet one of the higher-born daughters of the ancient race whose name she bore, and in that respect no derogatory alliance for Kenelm Chillingly. A conclusion she had arrived at from no better evidence than the well-bred appearance and manners of the aunt, and the exquisite delicacy of the niece's form and features, with the undefinable air of distinction which accompanied even her most careless and sportive moments. But Mrs. Braefield also had the wit to discover that under the infantine ways and phantasies of this almost self-taught girl, there lay, as yet undeveloped, the elements of a beautiful womanhood. So that altogether, from the very day she first re-encountered, Kenelm, Elsie's thought had been that Lily was the wife to suit him. Once conceiving that idea, her natural strength of will made her resolve on giving all facilities to carry it out silently and unobtrusively, and therefore skilfully.

"I am so glad to think," she said one day, when Kenelm had joined her walk through the pleasant shrubberies in her

garden ground, "that you have made such friends with Mr. Emlyn. Though all hereabouts like him so much for his goodness, there are few who can appreciate his learning. To you it must be a surprise as well as pleasure to find in this quiet humdrum place, a companion so clever and well-informed; it compensates for your disappointment in discovering that our brook yields such bad sport."

"Don't disparage the brook; it yields the pleasantest banks on which to lie down under old pollard oaks at noon, or over which to saunter at morn and eve. Where those charms are absent even a salmon could not please. Yes; I rejoice to have made friends with Mr. Emlyn. I have learned a great deal from him, and am often asking myself whether I shall ever make peace with my conscience by putting what I have learned into practice."

"May I ask what special branch of learning is that?"

"I scarcely know how to define it. Suppose we call it 'Worth-whileism.' Among the New Ideas which I was recommended to study as those that must govern my generation, the Not-worth-while Idea holds a very high rank; and being myself naturally of calm and equable constitution, that new idea made the basis of my philosophical system. But since I have become intimate with Charles Emlyn I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of Worth-whileism, old idea though it be. I see a man who, with very commonplace materials for interest or amusement at his command, continues to be always interested or generally amused; I ask myself why and how? And it seems to me as if the cause started from fixed beliefs which settle his relations with God and man, and that settlement he will not allow any speculations to disturb. Be those beliefs questionable or not by others, at least they are such as cannot displease a Deity, and cannot fail to be kindly and useful to fellow-mortals. Then he plants these beliefs on the soil of a happy and genial home, which tends to confirm and strengthen and call them into daily practice; and when he goes forth from home, even to the farthest verge of the circle that surrounds it, he carries with him the home influences of kindliness and use. Possibly my line of life may be drawn to the verge of

a wider circle than his; but so much the better for interest and amusement, if it can be drawn from the same centre—namely, fixed beliefs daily warmed into vital action in the sunshine of a congenial home.”

Mrs. Braefield listened to this speech with pleased attention, and as it came to its close, the name of Lily trembled on her tongue, for she divined that when he spoke of home Lily was in his thoughts; but she checked the impulse, and replied by a generalised platitude.

“Certainly the first thing in life is to secure a happy and congenial home. It must be a terrible trial for the best of us if we marry without love.”

“Terrible, indeed, if the one loves and the other does not.”

“That can scarcely be your case, Mr. Chillingly, for I am sure you could not marry where you did not love; and do not think I flatter you when I say that a man far less gifted than you can scarcely fail to be loved by the woman he woos and wins.”

Kenelm, in this respect one of the modestest of human beings, shook his head doubtingly, and was about to reply in self-disparagement, when, lifting his eyes and looking round, he halted mute and still as if rooted to the spot. They had entered the trellised circle through the roses of which he had first caught sight of the young face that had haunted him ever since.

“Ah!” he said abruptly; “I cannot stay longer here, dreaming away the work-day hours in a fairy ring. I am going to town to-day by the next train.”

“You are coming back?”

“Of course—this evening. I left no address at my lodgings in London. There must be a large accumulation of letters—some, no doubt, from my father and mother. I am only going for them. Good-bye. How kindly you have listened to me!”

“Shall we fix a day next week for seeing the remains of the old Roman villa? I will ask Mrs. Cameron and her niece to be of the party.”

Any day you please,” said Kenelm joyfully.

CHAPTER XV.

KENELM did indeed find a huge pile of letters and notes on reaching his forsaken apartment in Mayfair—many of them merely invitations for days long past, none of them of interest except two from Sir Peter, three from his mother, and one from Tom Bowles.

Sir Peter's were short. In the first he gently scolded Kenelm for going away without communicating any address; and stated the acquaintance he had formed with Gordon, the favourable impression that young gentleman had made on him, the transfer of the 20,000*l.* and the invitation given to Gordon, the Traverses, and Lady Glenalvon. The second, dated much later, noted the arrival of his invited guests, dwelt with warmth unusual to Sir Peter on the attractions of Cecilia, and took occasion to refer, not the less emphatically because as it were incidentally, to the sacred promise which Kenelm had given him never to propose to a young lady until the case had been submitted to the examination and received the consent of Sir Peter. "Come to Exmundham, and if I do not give my consent to propose to Cecilia Travers hold me a tyrant and rebel."

Lady Chillingly's letters were much longer. They dwelt more complainingly on his persistence in eccentric habits—so exceedingly unlike other people, quitting London at the very height of the season, going without even a servant nobody knew where—she did not wish to wound his feelings; but still those were not the ways natural to a young gentleman of station. If he had no respect for himself, he ought to have some consideration for his parents, especially his poor mother. She then proceeded to comment on the elegant manners of Leopold Travers, and the good sense and pleasant conversation of Chillingly Gordon, a young man of whom any mother might be proud. From that subject she diverged to mildly querulous references to family matters. Parson John had expressed himself very rudely to Mr. Chillingly Gordon upon some book by a foreigner—Comte or Count, or some such name—in which, so far as she could

pretend to judge, Mr. Gordon had uttered some very benevolent sentiments about humanity, which, in the most insolent manner, Parson John had denounced as an attack on religion. But really Parson John was too High Church for her. Having thus disposed of Parson John, she indulged some ladylike wailings on the singular costume of the three Miss Chillinglys. They had been asked by Sir Peter, unknown to her—so like him—to meet their guests; to meet Lady Glenalvon and Miss Travers, whose dress was so perfect (here she described their dress)—and they came in pea-green with pelerines of mock blonde, and Miss Sally with corkscrew ringlets and a wreath of jessamine, “which no girl after eighteen would venture to wear.”

“But, my dear,” added her ladyship, “your poor father’s family are certainly great oddities. I have more to put up with than any one knows. I do my best to carry it off. I know my duties, and will do them.”

Family grievances thus duly recorded and lamented, Lady Chillingly returned to her guests.

Evidently unconscious of her husband’s designs on Cecilia, she dismissed her briefly: “A very handsome young lady, though rather too blonde for her taste, and certainly with an air *distingué*.” Lastly, she enlarged on the extreme pleasure she felt on meeting again *the* friend of her youth, Lady Glenalvon.

“Not at all spoilt by the education of the great world, which, alas! obedient to the duties of wife and mother, however little my sacrifices are appreciated, I have long since relinquished. Lady Glenalvon suggests turning that hideous old moat into a fernery—a great improvement. Of course your poor father makes objections.

Tom’s letter was written on black-edged paper, and ran thus:—

“DEAR SIR,—Since I had the honour to see you in London I have had a sad loss—my poor uncle is no more. He died very suddenly after a hearty supper. One doctor says it was apoplexy, another valvular disease of the heart. He has left me his heir, after providing for his sister—no one had an idea that he had saved so much money. I am quite a rich man now. And I shall leave the veterinary business, which of late—since

I took to reading, as you kindly advised—is not much to my liking. The principal corn-merchant here has offered to take me into partnership; and, from what I can see, it will be a very good thing, and a great rise in life. But, sir, I can't settle to it at present—I can't settle, as I would wish to anything. I know you will not laugh at me when I say I have a strange longing to travel for a while. I have been reading books of travels, and they get into my head more than any other books. But I don't think I could leave the country with a contented heart, till I have had just another look at you know whom—just to see her, and know she is happy. I am sure I could shake hands with Will and kiss her little one without a wrong thought. What do you say to that, dear sir? You promised to write to me about her. But I have not heard from you. Susy, the little girl with the flower-ball, has had a loss too—the poor old man she lived with died within a few days of my dear uncle's decease. Mother moved here, as I think you know, when the forge at Graveleigh was sold; and she is going to take Susy to live with her. She is quite fond of Susy. Pray let me hear from you soon, and do, dear sir, give me your advice about travelling—and about Her. You see I should like Her to think of me more kindly when I am in distant parts.

“I remain, dear sir,

“Your grateful servant,

“T. BOWLES.”

“P.S.—Miss Travers has sent me Will's last remittance. There is very little owed me now; so they must be thriving. I hope she is not overworked.”

On returning by the train that evening Kenelm went to the house of Will Somers. The shop was already closed, but he was admitted by a trusty servant-maid to the parlour, where he found them all at supper, except indeed the baby, who had long since retired to the cradle, and the cradle had been removed up stairs. Will and Jessie were very proud when Kenelm invited himself to share their repast, which, though simple, was by no means a bad one. When the meal was

over and the supper things removed, Kenelm drew his chair near to the glass door which led into a little garden very neatly kept—for it was Will's pride to attend to it—before he sat down to his more professional work. The door was open, and admitted the coolness, of the starlit air and the fragrance of the sleeping flowers.

"You have a pleasant home here, Mrs. Somers."

"We have, indeed, and know how to bless him we owe it to."

"I am rejoiced to think that. How often when God designs a special kindness to us He puts the kindness into the heart of a fellow-man—perhaps the last fellow-man we should have thought of; but in blessing him we thank God who inspired him. Now, my dear friends, I know that you all three suspect me of being the agent whom God chose for His benefits. You fancy that it was from me came the loan which enabled you to leave Graveleigh and settle here. You are mistaken—you look incredulous."

"It could not be the Squire," exclaimed Jessie. "Miss Travers assured me that it was neither he nor herself. Oh, it must be you, sir. I beg pardon, but who else could it be?"

"Your husband shall guess. Suppose, Will, that you had behaved ill to some one who was nevertheless dear to you, and on thinking over it afterwards felt very sorry and much ashamed of yourself, and suppose that later you had the opportunity and the power to render a service to that person, do you think you would do it?"

"I should be a bad man if I did not."

"Bravo! And supposing that when the person you thus served came to know it was you who rendered the service, he did not feel thankful, he did not think it handsome of you, thus to repair any little harm he might have done you before, but became churlish, and sore, and cross-grained, and with a wretched false pride said that because he had offended you once he resented your taking the liberty of befriending him now, would you not think that person an ungrateful fellow,—ungrateful not only to you his fellow-man—that is of less moment—but

ungrateful to the God who put it into your heart to be His human agent in the benefit received?"

"Well, sir, yes, certainly," said Will, with all the superior refinement of his intellect to that of Jessie, unaware of what Kenelm was driving at; while Jessie, pressing her hands tightly together, turned pale, and with a frightened hurried glance towards Will's face, answered, impulsively—

"Oh, Mr. Chillingly, I hope you are not thinking, not speaking of Mr. Bowles?"

"Whom else should I think, or speak of?"

Will rose nervously from his chair, all his features writhing.

"Sir, sir, this is a bitter blow—very bitter, very."

Jessie rushed to Will, flung her arms round him and sobbed.

Kenelm turned quietly to old Mrs. Somers, who had suspended the work on which since supper she had been employed, knitting socks for the baby—

"My dear Mrs. Somers, what is the good of being a grandmother and knitting socks for baby grandchildren, if you cannot assure those silly children of yours that they are too happy in each other to harbour any resentment against a man who would have parted them, and now repents?"

Somewhat to Kenelm's admiration, I dare not say surprise, old Mrs. Somers, thus appealed to, rose from her seat, and, with a dignity of thought or of feeling no one could have anticipated from the quiet peasant woman, approached the wedded pair, lifted Jessie's face with one hand, laid the other on Will's head, and said, "If you don't long to see Mr. Bowles again and say 'The Lord bless you, sir!' you don't deserve the Lord's blessing upon you." Therewith she went back to her seat, and resumed her knitting.

"Thank Heaven, we have paid back the best part of the loan," said Will, in very agitated tones, "and I think, with a little pinching, Jessie, and with selling off some of the stock, we might pay the rest; and then"—and then he turned to Kenelm—"and then, sir, we will" (here a gulp) "thank Mr. Bowles."

"This don't satisfy me at all, Will," answered Kenelm; "and since I helped to bring you two together, I claim the right to say I would never have done so could I have guesed

you could have trusted your wife so little as to allow a remembrance of Mr. Bowles to be a thought of pain. You did not feel humiliated when you imagined that it was to me you owed some moneys which you have been honestly paying off. Well, then, I will lend you whatever trifle remains to discharge your whole debts to Mr. Bowles, so that you may sooner be able to say to him, 'Thank you.' But between you and me, Will, I think you will be a finer fellow and a manlier fellow if you decline to borrow that trifle of me; if you feel you would rather say 'Thank you' to Mr. Bowles, without the silly notion that when you have paid him his money you owe him nothing for his kindness."

Will looked away, irresolutely. Kenelm went on: "I have received a letter from Mr. Bowles to-day. He has come into a fortune, and thinks of going abroad for a time; but before he goes, he says he should like to shake hands with Will, and be assured by Jessie that all his old rudeness is forgiven. He had no notion that I should blab about the loan; he wished that to remain always a secret. But between friends there need be no secrets. What say you, Will? As head of this household, shall Mr. Bowles be welcomed here as a friend or not?"

"Kindly welcome," said old Mrs. Somers, looking up from the socks.

"Sir," said Will, with sudden energy, "look here; you have never been in love, I dare say. If you had, you would not be so hard on me. Mr. Bowles was in love with my wife there. Mr. Bowles is a very fine man, and I am a cripple."

"Oh, Will! Will!" cried Jessie.

"But I trust my wife with my whole heart and soul; and, now that the first pang is over, Mr. Bowles shall be, as mother says, kindly welcome—heartily welcome."

"Shake hands. Now you speak like a man, Will. I hope to bring Bowles here to supper before many days are over."

And that night Kenelm wrote to Mr. Bowles:

"MY DEAR TOM,—Come and spend a few days with me at Cromwell Lodge, Moleswich. Mr. and Mrs. Somers wish much

to see and to thank you. I could not remain for ever degraded in order to gratify your whim. They would have it that I bought their shop, &c., and I was forced in self-defence to say who it was. More on this and on travels when you come.

“Your true friend,

“K. C.”

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. CAMERON was seated alone in her pretty drawing-room, with a book lying open, but unheeded, on her lap. She was looking away from its pages, seemingly into the garden without, but rather into empty space.

To a very acute and practised observer, there was in her countenance an expression which baffled the common eye.

To the common eye it was simply vacant; the expression of a quiet, humdrum woman, who might have been thinking of some quiet humdrum household detail—found that too much for her, and was now not thinking at all.

But to the true observer, there were in that face indications of a troubled past, still haunted with ghosts never to be laid at rest—indications, too, of a character in herself that had undergone some revolutionary change; it had not always been the character of a woman quiet and humdrum. The delicate outlines of the lip and nostril evinced sensibility, and the deep and downward curve of it bespoke habitual sadness. The softness of the look into space did not tell of a vacant mind, but rather of a mind subdued and over-burthened by the weight of a secret sorrow. There was also about her whole presence, in the very quiet which made her prevalent external characteristic, the evidence of manners formed in a high-bred society—the society in which quiet is connected with dignity and grace. The poor understood this better than her rich acquaintances at Moleswich, when they said, “Mrs. Cameron was every inch a lady. To judge by her features she must once have been pretty,” not a showy pretti-

ness, but decidedly pretty. Now, as the features were small, all prettiness had faded away in cold grey colourings, and a sort of tamed and slumbering timidity of aspect. She was not only not demonstrative, but must have imposed on herself as a duty the suppression of demonstration. Who could look at the formation of those lips, and not see that they belonged to the nervous, quick, demonstrative temperament? And yet, observing her again more closely, that suppression of the constitutional tendency to candid betrayal of emotion, would the more enlist our curiosity or interest; because, if physiognomy and phrenology have any truth in them, there was little strength in her character. In the womanly yieldingness of the short curved upper lip, the pleading timidity of the *regard*, the disproportionate but elegant slenderness of the head between the ear and the neck, there were the tokens of one who cannot resist the will, perhaps the whim, of another whom she either loves or trusts.

The book open on her lap is a serious book on the doctrine of grace, written by a popular clergyman of what is termed "the Low Church." She seldom read any but serious books, except where such care as she gave to Lily's education compelled her to read *Outlines of History and Geography*, or the elementary French books used in seminaries for young ladies. Yet if any one had decoyed Mrs. Cameron into familiar conversation, he would have discovered that she must early have received the education given to young ladies of station. She could speak and write French and Italian as a native. She had read, and still remembered, such classic authors in either language as are conceded to the use of pupils by the well-regulated taste of orthodox governesses. She had a knowledge of botany, such as botany was taught twenty years ago. I am not sure that, if her memory had been fairly aroused, she might not have come out strong in divinity and political economy, as expounded by the popular manuals of Mrs. Marcet. In short, you could see in her a thoroughbred English lady, who had been taught in a generation before Lily's, and immeasurably superior in culture to the ordinary run of English young ladies taught nowadays. So, in what

after all are very minor accomplishments—now made major accomplishments—such as music, it was impossible that a connoisseur should hear her play on the piano without remarking, “That woman has had the best masters of her time.” She could only play pieces that belonged to her generation. She had learned nothing since. In short, the whole intellectual culture had come to a dead stop long years ago, perhaps before Lily was born.

Now, while she is gazing into space Mrs. Braefield is announced. Mrs. Cameron does not start from reverie. She never starts. But she makes a weary movement of annoyance, resettles herself, and lays the serious book on the sofa table. Elsie enters, young, radiant, dressed in all the perfection of the fashion, that is, as ungracefully as in the eyes of an artist any gentlewoman can be; but rich merchants who are proud of their wives so insist, and their wives, in that respect submissively obey them.

The ladies interchange customary salutations, enter into the customary preliminaries of talk, and, after a pause Elsie begins in earnest.

“But sha’n’t I see Lily? Where is she?”

“I fear she has gone into the town. A poor little boy, who did our errands, has met with an accident—fallen from a cherry-tree.”

“Which he was robbing?”

“Probably.”

“And Lily has gone to lecture him?”

“I don’t know as to that; but he is much hurt, and Lily has gone to see what is the matter with him.”

Mrs. Braefield, in her frank outspoken way—

“I don’t take much to girls of Lily’s age in general, though I am passionately fond of children. You know how I do take to Lily; perhaps because she is so like a child. But she must be an anxious charge to you.”

Mrs. Cameron replied by an anxious “No. She is still a child, a very good one; why should I be anxious?”

Mrs. Braefield, impulsively—

“Why, your child must now be eighteen.”

Mrs. Cameron—

“Eighteen—is it possible! How time flies! though in a life so monotonous as mine, time does not seem to fly, it slips on like the lapse of water. Let me think—eighteen? No, she is but seventeen—seventeen last May?”

Mrs. Braefield—“Seventeen! A very anxious age for a girl; an age in which dolls cease and lovers begin.”

Mrs. Cameron, not so languidly, but still quietly—

“Lily never cared much for dolls—never much for lifeless pets; and as to lovers, she does not dream of them.”

Mrs. Braefield, briskly—

“There is no age after six in which girls do not dream of lovers. And here another question arises. When a girl so lovely as Lily is eighteen next birthday, may not a lover dream of her?”

Mrs. Cameron, with that wintry cold tranquillity of manner, which implies that in putting such questions an interrogator is taking a liberty—

“As no lover has appeared, I cannot trouble myself about his dreams.”

Said Elsie inly to herself, “This is the stupidest woman I ever met!” and aloud to Mrs. Cameron—

“Do you not think that your neighbour, Mr. Chillingly, is a very fine young man?”

“I suppose he would be generally considered so. He is very all.”

“A handsome face?”

“Handsome, is it? I dare say.”

“What does Lily say?”

“About what?”

“About Mr. Chillingly. Does she not think him handsome?”

“I never asked her.”

“My dear Mrs. Cameron, would it not be a very pretty match for Lily? The Chillinglys are among the oldest families in Burke’s *Landed Gentry*, and I believe his father, Sir Peter, has a considerable property.”

For the first time in this conversation Mrs. Cameron betrayed emotion. A sudden flush overspread her countenance, and then

left it paler than before. After a pause she recovered her accustomed composure, and replied, rudely,

"It would be no friend to Lily who could put such notions into her head; and there is no reason to suppose that they have entered into Mr. Chillingly's."

"Would you be sorry if they did? Surely you would like your niece to marry well, and there are few chances of her doing so at Moleswich."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Braefield, but the question of Lily's marriage I have never discussed, even with her guardian. Nor, considering the childlike nature of her tastes and habits, rather than the years she has numbered, can I think the time has yet come for discussing it at all."

Elsie, thus rebuked, changed the subject to some newspaper topic which interested the public mind at the moment and very soon rose to depart. Mrs. Cameron detained the hand that her visitor held out, and said in low tones, which, though embarrassed, were evidently earnest, "My dear Mrs. Braefield, let me trust to your good sense and the affection with which you have honoured my niece, not to incur the risk of unsettling her mind by a hint of the ambitious projects for her future on which you have spoken to me. It is extremely improbable that a young man of Mr. Chillingly's expectations would entertain any serious thoughts of marrying out of his own sphere of life, and——"

"Stop, Mrs. Cameron, I must interrupt you. Lily's personal attractions and grace of manner would adorn any station; and have I not rightly understood you to say that though her guardian, Mr. Melville, is, as we all know, a man who has risen above the rank of his parents, your niece, Miss Mordaunt, is like yourself, by birth a gentlewoman?"

"Yes, by birth a gentlewoman," said Mrs. Cameron, raising her head with a sudden pride. But she added, with as sudden a change to a sort of freezing humility, "What does that matter? A girl without fortune, without connection, brought up in this little cottage, the ward of a professional artist, who was the son of a city clerk, to whom she owes even the home she has found, is not in the same sphere of life as Mr. Chillingly, and his parents could not approve of such an alliance for him. It would

be most cruel to her, if you were to change the innocent pleasure she may take in the conversation of a clever and well-informed stranger into the troubled interest which, since you remind me of her age, a girl even so childlike and beautiful as Lily might conceive in one represented to her as the possible partner of her life. Don't commit that cruelty ; don't—don't, I implore you ! ”

“ Trust me,” cried the warm-hearted Elsie, with tears rushing to her eyes. “ What you say so sensibly, so nobly, never struck me before. I do not know much of the world—knew nothing of it till I married—and being very fond of Lily, and having a strong regard for Mr. Chillingly, I fancied I could not serve both better than—than—but I see now ; he is very young, very peculiar ; his parents might object, not to Lily herself, but to the circumstances you name. And you would not wish her to enter any family where she was not as cordially welcomed as she deserves to be. I am glad to have had this talk with you. Happily, I have done no mischief as yet. I will do none. I had come to propose an excursion to the remains of the Roman Villa, some miles off, and to invite you and Mr. Chillingly. I will no longer try to bring him and Lily together.”

“ Thank you. But you still misconstrue me. I do not think that Lily cares half so much for Mr. Chillingly as she does for a new butterfly. I do not fear their coming together, as you call it, in the light in which she now regards him, and in which, from all I observe, he regards her. My only fear is that a hint might lead her to regard him in another way, and that way impossible.”

Elsie left the house extremely bewildered, and with a profound contempt for Mrs. Cameron's knowledge of what may happen to two young persons “ brought together.”

CHAPTER XVII.

Now, on that very day, and about the same hour in which the conversation just recorded between Elsie and Mrs. Cameron took place, Kenelm, in his solitary noonday wanderings, entered the burial-ground in which Lily had, some short time before, surprised him. And there he found her, standing beside the flower border which she had placed round the grave of the child whom she had tended and nursed in vain.

The day was cloudless and sunless; one of those days that so often instil a sentiment of melancholy into the heart of an English summer.

"You come here too often, Miss Mordaunt," said Kenelm, very softly, as he approached.

Lily turned her face to him, without any start of surprise, with no brightening change in its pensive expression — an expression rare to the mobile play of her features.

"Not too often. I promised to come as often as I could; and, as I told you before, I have never broken a promise yet."

Kenelm made no answer. Presently the girl turned from the spot, and Kenelm followed her silently till she halted before the old tombstone with its effaced inscription.

"See," she said, with a faint smile, "I have put fresh flowers there. Since the day we met in this churchyard, I have thought so much of that tomb, so neglected, so forgotten, and——" she paused a moment, and went on abruptly,—"do you not often find that you are much too—what is the word? ah! too egotistical, considering, and pondering, and dreaming greatly too much about yourself?"

"Yes, you are right there; though, till you so accused me, my conscience did not detect it."

"And don't you find that you escape from being so haunted by the thought of yourself, when you think of the dead? they can never have any share in your existence *here*. When you say, 'I shall do this or that to-day;' when you dream, 'I may be this or that to-morrow,' you are thinking and dreaming, al

by yourself, for yourself. But you are out of yourself, beyond yourself, when you think and dream of the dead, who can have nothing to do with your to-day or your to-morrow."

As we all know, Kenelm Chillingly made it one of the rules of his life never to be taken by surprise. But when the speech I have written down came from the lips of that tamer of butterflies, he was so startled that all it occurred to him to say, after a long pause, was—

"The dead are the past; and with the past rests all in the present or the future that can take us out of our natural selves. The past decides our present. By the past we divine our future. History, poetry, science, the welfare of states, the advancement of individuals, are all connected with tombstones of which inscriptions are effaced. You are right to honour the mouldered tombstones with fresh flowers. It is only in the companionship of the dead that one ceases to be an egotist."

If the imperfectly educated Lily had been above the quick comprehension of the academical Kenelm in her speech, so Kenelm was now above the comprehension of Lily. She too paused before she replied—

"If I knew you better, I think I could understand you better. I wish you knew Lion. I should like to hear you talk with him."

While thus conversing, they had left the burial-ground, and were in the pathway trodden by the common wayfarer.

Lily resumed.

"Yes, I should like to hear you talk with Lion."

"You mean your guardian, Mr. Melville?"

"Yes, you know that."

"And why should you like to hear me talk to him?"

"Because there are some things in which I doubt if he was altogether right, and I would ask you to express my doubts to him; you would, would you not?"

"But why can you not express them yourself to your guardian; are you afraid of him?"

"Afraid, no indeed! But—ah, how many people there are coming this way! There is some tiresome public meeting in the town to-day. Let us take the ferry, the other side

of the stream is much pleasanter, we shall have it more to ourselves."

Turning aside to the right while she thus spoke, Lily descended a gradual slope to the margin of the stream, on which they found an old man dozily reclined in his ferry-boat.

As, seated side by side, they were slowly borne over the still waters under a sunless sky, Kenelm would have renewed the subject which his companion had begun, but she shook her head, with a significant glance at the ferryman. Evidently what she had to say was too confidential to admit of a listener, not that the old ferryman seemed likely to take the trouble of listening to any talk that was not addressed to him. Lily soon did address her talk to him—"So, Brown, the cow has quite recovered."

"Yes, Miss, thanks to you, and God bless you. To think of your beating the old witch like that!"

"'Tis not I who beat the witch, Brown; 'tis the fairy. Fairies, you know, are much more powerful than witches."

"So I find, Miss."

Lily here turned to Kenelm—"Mr. Brown has a very nice milch-cow that was suddenly taken very ill, and both he and his wife were convinced that the cow was bewitched."

"Of course it were, that stands to reason. Did not Mother Wright tell my old woman that she would repent of selling milk, and abuse her dreadful; and was not the cow taken with shivers that very night?"

"Gently, Brown. Mother Wright did not say that your wife would repent of selling milk, but of putting water into it."

"And how did she know that, if she was not a witch? We have the best of customers among the gentlefolks, and never any one that complained."

"And," answered Lily to Kenelm, unheeding this last observation, which was made in a sullen manner, "Brown had a horrid notion of enticing Mother Wright into his ferry-boat and throwing her into the water, in order to break the spell upon the cow. But I consulted the fairies, and gave him a fairy charm to tie round the cow's neck. And the cow is

quite well now, you see. So Brown, there was no necessity to throw Mother Wright into the water, because she said you put some of it into the milk. But," she added, as the boat now touched the opposite bank, "shall I tell you, Brown, what the fairies said to me this morning?"

"Do, Miss."

"It was this: If Brown's cow yields milk without any water in it, and if water gets into it when the milk is sold, we, the fairies, will pinch Mr. Brown black and blue; and when Brown has his next fit of rheumatics he must not look to the fairies to charm it away."

Herewith Lily dropped a silver groat into Brown's hand, and sprang lightly ashore, followed by Kenelm.

"You have quite converted him, not only as to the existence, but as to the beneficial power of fairies," said Kenelm.

"Ah," answered Lily very gravely, "ah, but would it not be nice if there were fairies still? good fairies, and one could get at them? tell them all that troubles and puzzles us, and win from them charms against the witchcraft we practise on ourselves?"

"I doubt if it would be good for us to rely on such supernatural counsellors. Our own souls are so boundless, that the more we explore them the more we shall find worlds spreading upon worlds into infinities; and among the worlds is Fairyland." He added, inly to himself, "Am I not in Fairyland now?"

"Hush!" whispered Lily. "Don't speak more yet a while. I am thinking over what you have just said, and trying to understand it."

Thus walking silently they gained the little summer-house which tradition dedicated to the memory of Izaak Walton.

Lily entered it and seated herself; Kenelm took his place beside her. It was a small octagon building which, judging by its architecture, might have been built in the troubled reign of Charles I.; the walls plastered within were thickly covered with names and dates, and inscriptions in praise of angling, in tribute to Izaak, or with quotations from his books. On the opposite side they could see the lawn of Grasmere, with its great willows dipping into the water. The stillness of the

place, with its associations of the angler's still life, were in harmony with the quiet day, its breezeless air, and cloud-vested sky.

"You were to tell me your doubts in connection with your guardian, doubts if he were right in something which you left unexplained, which you could not yourself explain to him."

Lily started as from thoughts alien to the subject thus re-introduced. "Yes, I cannot mention my doubts to him because they relate to me, and he is so good. I owe him so much that I could not bear to vex him by a word that might seem like reproach or complaint. You remember"—here she drew nearer to him; and with that ingenuous confiding look and movement which had, not unfrequently, enraptured him at the moment, and saddened him on reflection—too ingenuous, too confiding, for the sentiment with which he yearned to inspire her—she turned towards him her frank untimorous eyes, and laid her hand on his arm: "you remember that I said in the burial-ground how much I felt that one is constantly thinking too much of one's self. That must be wrong. In talking to you only about myself I know I am wrong, but I cannot help it; I must do so. Do not think ill of me for it. You see I have not been brought up like other girls. Was my guardian right in that? Perhaps if he had insisted upon not letting me have my own wilful way, if he had made me read the books which Mr. and Mrs. Emlyn wanted to force on me, instead of the poems and fairy tales which he gave me, I should have had so much more to think of that I should have thought less of myself. You said that the dead were the past; one forgets one's self when one thinks of the dead. If I had read more of the past, had more subjects of interest in the dead whose history it tells, surely I should be less shut up, as it were, in my own small, selfish heart? It is only very lately I have thought of this, only very lately that I have felt sorrow and shame in the thought that I am so ignorant of what other girls know, even little Clemmy. And I dare not say this to Lion when I see him next, lest he should blame himself, when he only meant to be kind, and used to say, 'I don't want Fairy to be learned, it is enough for me to think she is happy.' And oh, I was so happy, till—till of late!"

"Because till of late you only knew yourself as a child. But, now that you feel the desire of knowledge, childhood is vanishing. Do not vex yourself. With the mind which nature has bestowed on you, such learning as may fit you to converse with those dreaded 'grown-up folks' will come to you very easily and quickly. You will acquire more in a month now than you would have acquired in a year when you were a child, and taskwork was loathed, not courted. Your aunt is evidently well instructed, and if I might venture to talk to her about the choice of books——"

"No, don't do that. Lion would not like it."

"Your guardian would not like you to have the education common to other young ladies?"

"Lion forbade my aunt to teach me much that I rather wished to learn. She wanted to do so, but she has given it up at his wish. She only now teases me with those horrid French verbs, and that I know is a mere make-belief. Of course on Sunday it is different; then I must not read anything but the Bible and sermons. I don't care so much for the sermons as I ought, but I could read the Bible all day, every week-day as well as Sunday; and it is from the Bible that I learn that I ought to think less about myself."

Kenelm involuntarily pressed the little hand that lay so innocently on his arm.

"Do you know the difference between one kind of poetry and another?" asked Lily, abruptly.

"I am not sure. I ought to know when one kind is good and another kind is bad. But in that respect I find many people, especially professed critics, who prefer the poetry which I call bad to the poetry I think good."

"The difference between one kind of poetry and another, supposing them both to be good," said Lily, positively, and with an air of triumph, "is this—I know, for Lion explained it to me. In one kind of poetry the writer throws himself entirely out of his existence, he puts himself into other existences quite strange to his own. He may be a very good man, and he writes his best poetry about very wicked men; he would not hurt a fly, but he delights in describing murderers.

But in the other kind of poetry the writer does not put himself into other existences, he expresses his own joys and sorrows, his own individual heart and mind. If he could not hurt a fly, he certainly could not make himself at home in the cruel heart of a murderer. There, Mr. Chillingly, that is the difference between one kind of poetry and another."

"Very true," said Kenelm, amused by the girl's critical definitions. "The difference between dramatic poetry and lyrical. But may I ask what that definition has to do with the subject into which you so suddenly introduced it?"

"Much—for when Lion was explaining this to my aunt, he said, 'A perfect woman is a poem; but she can never be a poem of the one kind, never can make herself at home in the hearts with which she has no connection, never feel any sympathy with crime and evil; she must be a poem of the other kind, weaving out poetry from her own thoughts and fancies.' And, turning to me, he said, smiling, 'That is the poem I wish Lily to be. Too many dry books would only spoil the poem.' And you now see why I am so ignorant, and so unlike other girls, and why Mr. and Mrs. Emlyn look down upon me."

"You wrong at least Mr. Emlyn, for it was he who first said to me, 'Lily Mordaunt is a poem.'"

"Did he? I shall love him for that. How pleased Lion will be!"

"Mr. Melville seems to have an extraordinary influence over your mind," said Kenelm, with a jealous pang.

"Of course. I have neither father nor mother—Lion has been both to me. Aunty has often said, 'You cannot be too grateful to your guardian; without him I should have no home to shelter you, no bread to give you.' *He* never said that—he would be very angry with aunty if he knew she had said it. When he does not call me Fairy he calls me Princess. I would not displease him for the world."

"He is very much older than you, old enough to be your father, I hear."

"I dare say. But if he were twice as old I could not love him better."

Kenelm smiled—the jealousy was gone. Certainly not thus

could any girl, even Lily, speak of one with whom, however she might love him, she was likely to fall in love.

Lily now rose up, rather slowly and wearily. "It is time to go home; aunty will be wondering what keeps me away—come."

They took their way towards the bridge opposite to Cromwell Lodge.

It was not for some minutes that either broke silence. Lily was the first to do so, and with one of those abrupt changes of topic which were common to the restless play of her secret thoughts.

"You have father and mother still living, Mr. Chillingly?"

"Thank Heaven, yes."

"Which do you love the best?"

"That is scarcely a fair question. I love my mother very much; but my father and I understand each other better than——"

"I see—it is so difficult to be understood. No one understands me."

"I think I do."

Lily shook her head with an energetic movement of dissent.

"At least as well as a man can understand a young lady."

"What sort of young lady is Miss Cecilia Travers?"

"Cecilia Travers! When and how did you ever hear that such a person existed?"

"That big London man whom they call Sir Thomas mentioned her name the day we dined at Braefieldville."

"I remember—as having been at the Court ball."

"He said she was very handsome."

"So she is."

"Is she a poem too?"

"No; that never struck me."

"Mr. Emlyn, I suppose, would call her perfectly brought up—well educated. He would not raise his eyebrows at her as he does at me—poor me, Cinderella!"

"Ah, Miss Mordaunt, you need not envy her. Again let me say that you could very soon educate yourself to the level of any young ladies who adorn the Court balls."

"Ay ; but then I should not be a poem," said Lily, with a shy, arch, side-glance at his face.

They were now on the bridge, and before Kenelm could answer Lily resumed quickly, "You need not come any farther ; it is out of your way."

"I cannot be so disdainfully dismissed, Miss Mordaunt ; I insist on seeing you to at least your garden gate."

Lily made no objection and again spoke—

"What sort of country do you live in when at home—is it like this ?"

"Not so pretty ; the features are larger, more hill and dale and woodland ; yet there is one feature in our grounds which reminds me a little of this landscape : a light stream, somewhat wider, indeed, than your brooklet ; but here and there the banks are so like those by Cromwell Lodge that I sometimes start and fancy myself at home. I have a strange love for rivulets, and all running waters, and in my foot wanderings I find myself magnetically attracted towards them."

Lily listened with interest, and after a short pause said, with a half-suppressed sigh, "Your home is much finer than any place here, even than Braefieldville, is it not ? Mrs. Braefield says your father is very rich."

"I doubt if he is richer than Mr. Braefield, and though his house may be larger than Braefieldville, it is not so smartly furnished, and has no such luxurious hothouses and conservatories. My father's tastes are like mine, very simple. Give him his library, and he would scarcely miss his fortune if he lost it. He has in this one immense advantage over me."

"You would miss fortune ?" said Lily, quickly.

"Not that ; but my father is never tired of books. And shall I own it ? there are days when books tire me almost as much as they do you."

They were now at the garden gate. Lily, with one hand on the latch held out the other to Kenelm, and her smile lit up the dull sky like a burst of sunshine, as she looked in his face and vanished.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

KENELM did not return home till dusk, and just as he was sitting down to his solitary meal there was a ring at the bell, and Mrs. Jones ushered in Mr. Thomas Bowles.

Though that gentleman had never written to announce the day of his arrival, he was not the less welcome.

"Only," said Kenelm, "if you preserve the appetite I have lost, I fear you will find meagre fare to-day. Sit down, man."

"Thank you, kindly, but I dined two hours ago in London, and I really can eat nothing more."

Kenelm was too well-bred to press unwelcome hospitalities. In a very few minutes his frugal repast was ended, the cloth removed, the two men were left alone.

"Your room is here, of course, Tom; that was engaged from the day I asked you, but you ought to have given me a line to say when to expect you, so that I could have put our hostess on her mettle as to dinner or supper. You smoke still, of course: light your pipe."

"Thank you, Mr. Chillingly, I seldom smoke now; but if you will excuse a cigar," and Tom produced a very smart cigar-case.

"Do as you would at home. I shall send word to Will Somers that you and I sup there to-morrow. You forgive me for letting out your secret. All straightforward now and henceforth. You come to their hearth as a friend, who will grow dearer to them both every year. Ah, Tom, this love

for woman seems to me a very wonderful thing. It may sink a man into such deeps of evil, and lift a man into such heights of good."

"I don't know as to the good," said Tom, mournfully, and laying aside his cigar.

"Go on smoking; I should like to keep you company; can you spare me one of your cigars?"

Tom offered his case. Kenelm extracted a cigar, lighted it, drew a few whiffs, and when he saw that Tom had resumed his own cigar, recommenced conversation.

"You don't know as to the good; but tell me honestly, do you think if you had not loved Jessie Wiles, you would be as good a man as you are now?"

"If I am better than I was, it is not because of my love for the girl."

"What then?"

"The loss of her."

Kenelm started, turned very pale, threw aside the cigar, rose, and walked the room to and fro with very quick but very irregular strides.

Tom continued quietly. "Suppose I had won Jessie and married her, I don't think any idea of improving myself would have entered my head. My uncle would have been very much offended at my marrying a day-labourer's daughter, and would not have invited me to Luscombe. I should have remained at Graveleigh, with no ambition of being more than a common farrier, an ignorant, noisy, quarrelsome man; and if I could not have made Jessie as fond of me as I wished, I should not have broken myself of drinking, and I shudder to think what a brute I might have been, when I see in the newspapers an account of some drunken wife-beater. How do we know but what that wife-beater loved his wife dearly before marriage, and she did not care for him? His home was unhappy, and so he took to drink and to wife-beating."

"I was right, then," said Kenelm, halting his strides, "when I told you it would be a miserable fate to be married to a girl whom you loved to distraction, and whose heart you could never warm to you, whose life you could never render happy."

"So right!"

"Let us drop that part of the subject at present," said Kenelm reseating himself, "and talk about your wish to travel. Though contented that you did not marry Jessie, though you can now, without anguish, greet her as the wife of another, still there are some lingering thoughts of her that make you restless; and you feel that you could more easily wrench yourself from these thoughts in a marked change of scene and adventure, that you might bury them altogether in the soil of a strange land. Is it so?"

"Ay, something of that, sir."

Then Kenelm roused himself to talk of foreign lands, and to map out a plan of travel that might occupy some months. He was pleased to find that Tom had already learned enough of French to make himself understood at least upon commonplace matters, and still more pleased to discover that he had been not only reading the proper guide-books or manuals descriptive of the principal places in Europe worth visiting, but that he had acquired an interest in the places; interest in the fame attached to them by their history in the past, or by the treasures of art they contained.

So they talked far into the night, and when Tom retired to his room, Kenelm let himself out of the house noiselessly, and walked with slow steps towards the old summer-house in which he had sat with Lily. The wind had risen, scattering the clouds that had veiled the preceding day, so that the stars were seen in far chasms of the sky beyond—seen for a while in one place, and when the swift clouds rolled over them there, shining out elsewhere. Amid the varying sounds of the trees, through which swept the night gusts, Kenelm fancied he could distinguish the sigh of the willow on the opposite lawn of Grasmere.

CHAPTER II.

KENELM despatched a note to Will Somers early the next morning, inviting himself and Mr. Bowles to supper that evening. His tact was sufficient to make him aware that in such social meal there would be far less restraint for each and all concerned than in a more formal visit from Tom during the day-time; and when Jessie, too, was engaged with customers to the shop.

But he led Tom through the town and showed him the shop itself, with its pretty goods at the plate-glass windows, and its general air of prosperous trade; then he carried him off into the lanes and fields of the country, drawing out the mind of his companion, and impressed with great admiration of its marked improvement in culture, and in the trains of thought which culture opens out and enriches.

But throughout all their multiform range of subject Kenelm could perceive that Tom was still preoccupied and abstracted; the idea of the coming interview with Jessie weighed upon him.

When they left Cromwell Lodge at nightfall, to repair to the supper at Will's, Kenelm noticed that Bowles had availed himself of the contents of his carpet-bag to make some refined alterations in his dress. The alterations became him.

When they entered the parlour, Will rose from his chair with the evidence of deep emotion on his face, advanced to Tom, took his hand and grasped and dropped it without a word. Jessie saluted both guests alike, with drooping eyelids and an elaborate curtsy. The old mother alone was perfectly self-possessed and up to the occasion.

"I am heartily glad to see you, Mr. Bowles," said she, "and so all three of us are, and ought to be; and if baby was older, there would be four."

"And where on earth have you hidden baby?" cried Kenelm. "Surely he might have been kept up for me to-night, when I was expected; the last time I supped here I took you by

surprise, and therefore had no right to complain of baby's want of respect to her parents' friends."

Jessie raised the window-curtain, and pointed to the cradle behind it. Kenelm linked his arm in Tom's, led him to the cradle, and leaving him alone to gaze on the sleeping inmate, seated himself at the table, between old Mrs. Somers and Will. Will's eyes were turned away towards the curtain, Jessie holding its folds aside, and the formidable Tom, who had been the terror of his neighbourhood, bending smiling over the cradle: till at last he laid his large hand on the pillow, gently, timidly, careful not to awake the helpless sleeper, and his lips moved, doubtless with a blessing; then he too came to the table, seating himself, and Jessie carried the cradle up stairs.

Will fixed his keen intelligent eyes on his bygone rival; and noticing the changed expression of the once aggressive countenance, the changed costume in which, without tinge of rustic foppery, there was the token of a certain gravity of station scarcely compatible with a return to old loves and old habits in the village world, the last shadow of jealousy vanished from the clear surface of Will's affectionate nature.

"Mr. Bowles," he exclaimed, impulsively, "you have a kind heart, and a good heart, and a generous heart. And your coming here to-night on this friendly visit is an honour which—which"—Which," interrupted Kenelm, compassionating Will's embarrassment, "is on the side of us single men. In this free country a married man who has a male baby may be father to the Lord Chancellor or the Archbishop of Canterbury. But—well, my friends, such a meeting as we have to-night does not come often; and after supper let us celebrate it with a bowl of punch. If we have headaches the next morning none of us will grumble."

Old Mrs. Somers laughed out jovially. "Bless you, sir, I did not think of the punch; I will go and see about it," and, baby's socks still in her hands, she hastened from the room.

What with the supper, what with the punch, and what with Kenelm's art of cheery talk on general subjects, all reserve, all awkwardness, all shyness between the convivialists,

rapidly disappeared. Jessie mingled in the talk; perhaps (excepting only Kenelm) she talked more than the others, artlessly, gaily, no vestige of the old coquetry; but, now and then, with a touch of genteel finery, indicative of her rise in life, and of the contact of the fancy shopkeeper with noble customers. It was a pleasant evening—Kenelm had resolved that it should be so. Not a hint of the obligations to Mr. Bowles escaped until Will, following his visitor to the door, whispered to Tom, “You don’t want thanks, and I can’t express them. But when we say our prayers at night, we have always asked God to bless him who brought us together, and has since made us so prosperous—I mean Mr. Chillingly. To-night there will be another besides him, for whom we shall pray, and for whom baby, when he is older, will pray too.”

Therewith Will’s voice thickened; and he prudently receded, with no unreasonable fear lest the punch might make him too demonstrative of emotion if he said more.

Tom was very silent on the return to Cromwell Lodge; it did not seem the silence of depressed spirits, but rather of quiet meditation, from which Kenelm did not attempt to rouse him.

It was not till they reached the garden ‘pales of Grasmere that Tom, stopping short, and turning his face to Kenelm, said—

“I am very grateful to you for this evening—very.”

“It has revived no painful thoughts then?”

“No; I feel so much calmer in mind than I ever believed I could have been, after seeing her again.”

“Is it possible!” said Kenelm, to himself. “How should I feel if I ever saw in Lily the wife of another man: the mother of his child?” At that question he shuddered, and an involuntary groan escaped from his lips. Just then having, willingly in those precincts, arrested his steps, when Tom paused to address him, something softly touched the arm which he had rested on the garden pale. He looked, and saw that it was Blanche. The creature, impelled by its instincts towards night-wanderings, had, somehow or other, escaped,

from its own bed within the house, and hearing a voice that had grown somewhat familiar to its ear, crept from among the shrubs behind upon the edge of the pale. There it stood, with arched back, purring low as in pleased salutation.

Kenelm bent down and covered with kisses the blue ribbon which Lily's hand had bound round the favourite's neck. Blanche submitted to the caress for a moment, and then catching a slight rustle among the shrubs made by some awaking bird, sprang into the thick of the quivering leaves and vanished.

Kenelm moved on with a quick impatient stride, and no further words were exchanged between him and his companion till they reached their lodging and parted for the night.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day, towards noon, Kenelm and his visitor, walking together along the brook side, stopped before Izaak Walton's summer-house, and, at Kenelm's suggestion, entered therein to rest, and more at their ease to continue the conversation they had begun.

"You have just told me," said Kenelm, "that you feel as if a load were taken off your heart, now that you have again met Jessie Somers, and that you find her so changed that she is no longer the woman you loved. As to the change, whatever it be, I own, it seems to me for the better, in person, in manners, in character; of course I should not say this, if I were not convinced of your perfect sincerity when you assured me that you are cured of the old wound. But I feel so deeply interested in the question how a fervent love, once entertained and enthroned in the heart of a man so earnestly affectionate and so warm-blooded as yourself, can be, all of a sudden, at a single interview, expelled or transferred into the calm sentiment of friendship, that I pray you to explain."

"That is what puzzles me, sir," answered Tom, passing his

hand over his forehead. "And I don't know if I can explain it."

"Think over it, and try."

Tom mused for some moments and then began. "You see, sir, that I was a very different man myself when I fell in love with Jessie Wiles, and said, 'Come what may, that girl shall be my wife. Nobody else shall have her.'"

"Agreed; go on."

"But while I was becoming a different man, when I thought of her—and I was always thinking of her—I still pictured her to myself as the same Jessie Wiles; and though, when I did see her again at Graveleigh, after she had married—the day—"

"You saved her from the insolence of the squire."

"—She was but very recently married. I did not realise her as married. I did not see her husband, and the difference within myself was only then beginning. Well, so all the time I was reading and thinking, and striving to improve my old self at Luscombe, still Jessie Wiles haunted me as the only girl I had ever loved, ever could love; I could not believe it possible that I could ever marry any one else. And lately I have been much pressed to marry some one else; all my family wish it; but the face of Jessie rose up before me, and I said to myself, 'I should be a base man if I married one woman, while I could not get another woman out of my head.' I must see Jessie once more, must learn whether her face is now really the face that haunts me when I sit alone; and I have seen her, and it is not that face; it may be handsomer, but it is not a girl's face, it is the face of a wife and a mother. And, last evening, while she was talking with an open-heartedness which I had never found in her before, I became strangely conscious of the difference in myself that had been silently at work within the last two years or so. Then, sir, when I was but an ill-conditioned, uneducated, petty village farrier, there was no inequality between me and a peasant girl; or, rather, in all things except fortune, the peasant girl was much above me. But last evening I asked myself, watching her and listening to her talk, 'If Jessie were now free, should I press her to be my wife?' and I answered myself, 'No.'"

Kenelm listened with rapt attention, and exclaimed briefly, but passionately, "Why?"

"It seems as if I were giving myself airs to say why. But, sir, lately I have been thrown among persons, women as well as men, of a higher class than I was born in; and in a wife I should want a companion up to their mark, and who would keep me up to mine; and ah, sir, I don't feel as if I could find that companion in Mrs. Somers."

"I understand you now, Tom. But you are spoiling a silly romance of mine. I had fancied the little girl with the flower face would grow up to supply the loss of Jessie; and, I am so ignorant of the human heart, I did think it would take all the years required for the little girl to open into a woman, before the loss of the old love could be supplied. I see now that the poor little child with the flower face has no chance."

"Chance? Why, Mr. Chillingly," cried Tom, evidently much nettled, "Susy is a dear little thing, but she is scarcely more than a mere charity girl. Sir, when I last saw you in London you touched on that matter as if I were still the village farrier's son, who might marry a village labourer's daughter. But," added Tom, softening down his irritated tone of voice, "even if Susy were a lady born I think a man would make a very great mistake, if he thought he could bring up a little girl to regard him as a father; and then, when she grew up, expect her to accept him as a lover."

"Ah, you think that!" exclaimed Kenelm, eagerly, and turning eyes that sparkled with joy towards the lawn of Grasmere. "You think that; it is very sensibly said—well—and you have been pressed to marry, and have hung back till you had seen again Mrs. Somers. Now you will be better disposed to such a step; tell me about it?"

"I said, last evening, that one of the principal capitalists at Luscombe, the leading corn-merchant, had offered to take me into partnership. And, sir, he has an only daughter, she is a very amiable girl, has had a first-rate education, and has such pleasant manners and way of talk, quite a lady. If I married her I should soon be the first man in Luscombe, and Luscombe, as you are no doubt aware, returns two members

to Parliament; who knows, but that some day the farrier's son might be——” Tom stopped abruptly—abashed at the aspiring thought which, while speaking, had deepened his hardy colour and flashed from his honest eyes.

“Ah!” said Kenelm, almost mournfully, “is it so? must each man in his life play many parts? Ambition succeeds to love, the reasoning brain to the passionate heart. True, you are changed; my Tom Bowles is gone.”

“Not gone in his undying gratitude to you, sir,” said Tom, with great emotion. “Your Tom Bowles would give up all his dreams of wealth or of rising in life, and go through fire and water to serve the friend who first bid him be a new Tom Bowles! Don't despise me as your own work: you said to me that terrible day, when madness was on my brow and crime within my heart, ‘I will be to you the truest friend man ever found in man.’ So you have been. You commanded me to read, you commanded me to think, you taught me that body should be the servant of mind.”

“Hush, hush, times are altered; it is you who can teach me now. Teach me, teach me; how does ambition replace love? How does the desire to rise in life become the all-mastering passion, and, should it prosper, the all-atoning consolation of our life? We can never be as happy, though we rose to the throne of the Cæsars, as we dream that we could have been, had Heaven but permitted us to dwell in the obscurest village, side by side with the woman we love.”

Tom was exceedingly startled by such a burst of irrepressible passion from the man who had told him, that though friends were found only once in a life sweethearts were as plentiful as blackberries.

Again he swept his hand over his forehead, and replied hesitatingly. “I can't pretend to say what may be the case with others. But to judge by my own case, it seems to me this: a young man who, out of his own business, has nothing to interest or excite him, finds content, interest, and excitement when he falls in love; and then, whether for good or ill, he thinks there is nothing like love in the world, he don't care a fig for ambition then. Over and over again did my poor

uncle ask me to come to him at Luscombe, and represent all the worldly advantage it would be to me ; but I could not leave the village in which Jessie lived, and, besides, I felt myself unfit to be anything higher than I was. But when I had been some time at Luscombe, and gradually got accustomed to another sort of people, and another sort of talk, then I began to feel interest in the same objects that interested those about me ; and when, partly by mixing with better educated men, and partly by the pains I took to educate myself, I felt that I might now more easily rise above my uncle's rank of life than two years ago I could have risen above a farrier's forge, then the ambition to rise did stir in me, and grew stronger every day. Sir, I don't think you can wake up a man's intellect but what you wake with it emulation. And, after all, emulation is ambition."

"Then, I suppose, I have no emulation in me, for certainly I have no ambition."

• "That I can't believe, sir ; other thoughts may cover it over and keep it down for a time. But sooner or later, it will force its way to the top, as it has done with me. To get on in life, to be respected by those who know you, more and more as you grow older, I call that a manly desire. I am sure it comes as naturally to an Englishman as—as——"

"As the wish to knock down some other Englishman who stands in his way, does. I perceive now that you were always a very ambitious man, Tom ; the ambition has only taken another direction. Cæsar might have been

" 'But the first wrestler on the green.'"

And now, I suppose, you abandon the idea of travel ; you will return to Luscombe, cured of all regret for the loss of Jessie ; you will marry the young lady you mention, and rise, through progressive steps of alderman and mayor, into the rank of Member for Luscombe."

"All that may come in good time," answered Tom, not resenting the tone of irony in which he was addressed, "but I still intend to travel ; a year so spent must render me all the more fit for any station I aim at. I shall go back to Luscombe

to arrange my affairs, come to terms with Mr. Leland the corn-merchant, against my return, and——”

“The young lady is to wait till then.”

“Emily——”

“Oh, that is the name? Emily! a much more elegant name than Jessie.”

“Emily,” continued Tom, with an unruffled placidity, which, considering the aggravating bitterness for which Kenelm had exchanged his wonted dulcitudes of indifferentism, was absolutely saintlike, “Emily knows that if she were my wife I should be proud of her, and will esteem me the more if she feels how resolved I am that she shall never be ashamed of me.”

“Pardon me, Tom,” said Kenelm softened, and laying his hand on his friend’s shoulder with brotherlike tenderness. “Nature has made you a thorough gentleman; and you could not think and speak more nobly if you had come into the world as the head of all the Howards.”

CHAPTER IV.

TOM went away the next morning. He declined to see Jessie again, saying curtly, “I don’t wish the impression made on me the other evening to incur a chance of being weakened.”

Kenelm was in no mood to regret his friend’s departure. Despite all the improvement in Tom’s manners and culture, which raised him so much nearer to equality with the polite and instructed heir of the Chillinglys, Kenelm would have felt more in sympathy and *rapprochement* with the old disconsolate fellow-wanderer who had reclined with him on the grass, listening to the Minstrel’s talk or verse, than he did with the practical, rising citizen of Luscombe. To the young lover of Lily Mordaunt there was a discord, a jar, in the knowledge that the human heart admits of such well-reasoned, well-justified transfers of allegiance; a Jessie to-day, or an Emily to-morrow—“*La reine est morte: vive la reine!*”

An hour or two after Tom had gone, Kenelm found himself

almost mechanically led towards Braefieldville. He had instinctively divined Elsie's secret wish with regard to himself and Lily, however skilfully she thought she had concealed it.

At Braefieldville he should hear talk of Lily, and in the scenes where Lily had been first beheld.

He found Mrs. Braefield alone in the drawing-room, seated by a table covered with flowers, which she was assorting and inter-mixing for the vases to which they were destined.

It struck him that her manner was more reserved than usual and somewhat embarrassed ; and when, after a few preliminary matters of small talk, he rushed boldly *in medias res* and asked if she had seen Mrs. Cameron lately ? she replied briefly, "Yes, I called there the other day," and immediately changed the conversation to the troubled state of the Continent.

Kenelm was resolved not to be so put off, and presently returned to the charge.

"The other day you proposed an excursion to the site of the Roman villa, and said you would ask Mrs. Cameron to be of the party. Perhaps you have forgotten it ?"

"No ; but Mrs. Cameron declines. We can ask the Emlyns instead. He will be an excellent *cicerone*."

"Excellent ! Why did Mrs. Cameron decline ?"

Elsie hesitated, and then lifted her clear brown eyes to his face, with a sudden determination to bring matters to a crisis.

"I cannot say why Mrs. Cameron declined, but in declining she acted very wisely and very honourably. Listen to me, Mr. Chillingly. You know how highly I esteem, and how cordially I like you, and judging by what I felt for some weeks, perhaps longer, after we parted at Tor Hadham— Here again she hesitated, and with a half laugh and a slight blush, again went resolutely on. "If I were Lily's aunt or elder sister, I should do as Mrs. Cameron does ; decline to let Lily see much more of a young gentleman too much above her in wealth and station for——"

"Stop," cried Kenelm, haughtily, "I cannot allow that any man's wealth or station would warrant his presumption in thinking himself above Miss Mordaunt."

"Above her in natural grace and refinement, certainly not. But in the world there are other considerations which, perhaps, Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly might take into account."

"You did not think of that before you last saw Mrs. Cameron."

"Honestly speaking, I did not. Assured that Miss Mordaunt was a gentlewoman by birth, I did not sufficiently reflect upon other disparities."

"You know, then, that she is by birth a gentlewoman?"

"I only know it as all here do, by the assurance of Mrs. Cameron, whom no one could suppose not to be a lady. But there are different degrees of lady and of gentleman, which are little heeded in the ordinary intercourse of society, but become very perceptible in questions of matrimonial alliance; and Mrs. Cameron herself says very plainly that she does not consider her niece to belong to that station in life from which Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly would naturally wish their son should select his bride. Then (holding out her hand) pardon me if I have wounded or offended you. I speak as a true friend to you and to Lily both. Earnestly I advise you, if Miss Mordaunt be the cause of your lingering here, earnestly I advise you to leave while yet in time for her peace of mind and your own."

"Her peace of mind," said Kenelm, in low faltering tones, scarcely hearing the rest of Mrs. Braefield's speech. "Her peace of mind? Do you sincerely think that she cares for me—could care for me—if I stayed?"

"I wish I could answer you decidedly. I am not in the secrets of her heart. I can but conjecture that it might be dangerous for the peace of any young girl to see too much of a man like yourself, to divine that he loved her, and not to be aware that he could not, with the approval of his family, ask her to become his wife."

Kenelm bent his face down, and covered it with his right hand. He did not speak for some moments. Then he rose, the fresh cheek very pale, and said—

"You are right, Miss Mordaunt's peace of mind must be

the first consideration. Excuse me if I quit you thus abruptly. You have given me much to think of, and I can only think of it adequately when alone."

CHAPTER V.

FROM KENELM CHILLINGLY TO SIR PETER CHILLINGLY.

"MY FATHER, MY DEAR FATHER,—“This is no reply to your letters. I know not if itself can be called a letter. I cannot yet decide whether it be meant to reach your hands. Tired with talking to myself, I sit down to talk to you. Often have I reproached myself for not seeing every fitting occasion to let you distinctly know how warmly I love, how deeply I reverence you; you, O friend, O father. But we Chillinglys are not a demonstrative race. I don't remember that you, by words, ever expressed to me the truth that you loved your son infinitely more than he deserves. Yet, do I not know that you would send all your beloved old books to the hammer rather than I should pine in vain for some untried, if sinless delight on which I had set my heart? And do you not know equally well, that I would part with all my heritage, and turn day-labourer, rather than you should miss the beloved old books?"

"That mutual knowledge is taken for granted in all that my heart yearns to pour forth to your own. But, if I divine aright, a day is coming when, as between you and me, there must be a sacrifice on the part of one to the other. If so, I implore that the sacrifice may come from you. How is this? How am I so ungenerous, so egotistical, so selfish, so ungratefully unmindful of all I already owe to you, and may never repay? I can only answer, 'It is fate, it is nature, it is love'—

* * *

* Here I must break off. It is midnight, the moon halts opposite to the window at which I sit, and on the stream that runs below there is a long narrow track on which every wave

trembles in her light ; on either side of the moonlit track all the other waves, running equally to their grave in the invisible deep, seem motionless and dark. I can write no more."

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Dated two days later.

"They say she is beneath us in wealth and station. Are we, my father — we, two well-born gentlemen — coveters of gold or lackeys of the great? When I was at College, if there were any there more heartily despised than another it was the parasite and the tuft-hunter; the man who chose his friends according as their money or their rank might be of use to him. If so mean were the choice is so little important to the happiness and career of a man who has something of manhood in him, how much more mean to be the parasite and tuft-hunter in deciding what woman to love, what woman to select as the sweetener and ennobler of one's everyday life! Could she be to my life that sweetener, that ennobler? I firmly believe it. Already life itself has gained a charm that I never even guessed in it before; already I begin, though as yet but faintly and vaguely, to recognise that interest in the objects and aspirations of my fellow-men which is strongest in those whom posterity ranks among its ennoblers. In this quiet village it is true that I might find examples enough to prove that man is not meant to meditate upon life, but to take active part in it, and in that action to find his uses. But I doubt if I should have profited by such examples; if I should not have looked on this small stage of the world as I have looked on the large one, with the indifferent eyes of a spectator on a trite familiar play carried on by ordinary actors, had not my whole being suddenly leapt out of philosophy into passion, and, at once made warmly human, sympathised with humanity wherever it burned and glowed. Ah is there to be any doubt of what station, as mortal bride, is due to her — her, my princess, my, Fairy? If so, how contented you shall be, my father, with the worldly career of your son! how perseveringly he will strive (and when did perseverance fail?) to supply all his deficiencies of intellect, genius, knowledge, by the energy concentrated on a single

object which—more than intellect, genius, knowledge, unless they attain to equal energy equally concentrated—commands what the world calls honours.

“Yes, with her, with her as the bearer of my name, with her to whom I, whatever I might do of good or of great, could say, ‘It is thy work,’ I promise that you shall bless the day when you took to your arms a daughter.

* * * *

“‘Thou art in contact with the beloved in all that thou feelest elevated above thee.’ So it is written by one of those weird Germans who search in our bosoms for the seeds of buried truths, and conjure them into flowers before we ourselves were even aware of the seeds.

“Every thought that associates itself with my beloved seems to me born with wings.

* * * *

I have just seen her, just parted from her. Since I had been told—kindly, wisely told—that I had no right to hazard her peace of mind unless I were privileged to woo and to win her, I promised myself that I would shun her presence until I had bared my heart to you, as I am doing now, and received that privilege from yourself; for even had I never made the promise that binds my honour, your consent and blessing must hallow my choice. I do not feel as if I could dare to ask one so innocent and fair to wed an ungrateful, disobedient son. But this evening I met her, unexpectedly, at the vicar’s, an excellent man, from whom I have learned much; whose precepts, whose example, whose delight in his home, and his life at once active and serene, are in harmony with my own dreams when I dream of her.

“I will tell you the name of the beloved—hold it is as yet a profound secret between you and me. But oh for the day when I may hear you call her by that name, and print on her forehead the only kiss by man of which I should not be jealous.

“It is Sunday, and after the evening service it is my friend’s custom to gather his children round him, and, without any formal sermon or discourse, engage their interest in subjects harmonious to associations with the sanctity of the day; often

not directly bearing upon religion ; more often, indeed, playfully starting from some little incident or some slight story-book which had amused the children in the course of the past week, and then gradually winding into reference to some sweet moral precept or illustration from some divine example. It is a maxim with him that, while much that children must learn they can only learn well through conscious labour, and as positive task-work, yet Religion should be connected in their minds not with labour and task-work, but should become insensibly infused into their habits of thought, blending itself with memories and images of peace and love ; with the indulgent tenderness of the earliest teachers, the sinless mirthfulness of the earliest home ; with consolation in after sorrows, support through after trials, and never parting company with its twin sister, Hope.

"I entered the vicar's room this evening just as the group had collected round him. By the side of his wife sat a lady in whom I feel a keen interest. Her face wears that kind of calm which speaks of the lassitude bequeathed by sorrow. She is the aunt of my beloved one. Lily had nestled herself on a low ottoman, at the good pastor's feet, with one of his little girls, round whose shoulder she had wound her arm. She is much more fond of the companionship of children than that of girls of her own age. The vicar's wife, a very clever woman, once, in my hearing, took her to task for this preference, asking her why she persisted in grouping herself with mere infants who could teach her nothing ? Ah ! could you have seen the innocent, angel-like expression of her face when she answered simply, 'I suppose because with them I feel safer, I mean nearer to God.'

"Mr. Emlyn—that is the name of the vicar—deduced his homily this evening from a pretty fairy tale which Lily had been telling to his children the day before, and which he drew her on to repeat

"Take, in brief, the substance of the story :—

"Once on a time, a king and queen made themselves very unhappy because they had no heir to their throne ; and they prayed for one ; and lo, on some bright summer morning, the Queen, waking from sleep, saw a cradle beside her bed, and

in the cradle a beautiful sleeping babe. Great day throughout the kingdom! But as the infant grew up, it became very wayward and fretful; it lost its beauty, it would not learn its lessons, it was as naughty as a child could be. The parents were very sorrowful; the heir, so longed for, promised to be a great plague to themselves and their subjects. At last one day, to add to their trouble, two little bumps appeared on the Prince's shoulders. All the doctors were consulted as to the cause and the cure of this deformity. Of course they tried the effect of back-bands and steel machines, which gave the poor little Prince great pain, and made him more unamiable than ever. The bumps, nevertheless, grew larger, and as they increased, so the Prince sickened and pined away. At last a skilful surgeon proposed, as the only chance of saving the Prince's life, that the bumps should be cut out, and the next morning was fixed for that operation. But at night the Queen saw, or dreamed she saw, a beautiful shape standing by her bedside. And it said to her reproachfully, "Ungrateful woman! How wouldst thou repay me for the precious boon that my favour bestowed on thee! In me behold the Queen of the Fairies. For the heir to thy kingdom, I consigned to thy charge an infant from Fairyland, to become a blessing to thee and to thy people; and thou wouldst inflict upon it a death of torture by the surgeon's knife." And the Queen answered: "Precious indeed thou mayest call the boon! A miserable, sickly, feverish changeling."

"Art thou so dull," said the beautiful visitant, "as not to comprehend that the earliest instincts of the fairy child would be those of discontent, at the exile from its native home? and in that discontent it would have pined itself to death, or grown up, soured and malignant, a fairy still in its power but a fairy of wrath and evil, had not the strength of its inborn nature sufficed to develop the growth of its wings. That which thy blindness condemns as the deformity of the human-born, is to the fairy-born the crowning perfection of its beauty. Woe to thee, if thou suffer not the wings of the fairy child to grow."

"And the next morning the Queen sent away the surgeon when he came with his horrible knife, and removed the back-

board and the steel machines from the Prince's shoulders, though all the doctors predicted that the child would die. And from that moment the royal heir began to recover bloom and health. And when at last, out of those deforming bumps, budded delicately forth the plumage of snow-white wings, the wayward peevishness of the Prince gave place to sweet temper. Instead of scratching his teachers, he became the quickest and most docile of pupils, grew up to be the joy of his parents and the pride of their people; and people said, "In him we shall have hereafter such a king as we have never yet known."

"Here ended Lily's tale. I cannot convey to you a notion of the pretty, playful manner in which it was told. Then she said, with a grave shake of the head, 'But you do not seem to know what happened afterwards. Do you suppose that the Prince never made use of his wings? Listen to me. It was discovered by the courtiers who attended on His Royal Highness that on certain nights, every week, he disappeared. In fact, on these nights, obedient to the instinct of the wings, he flew from palace halls into Fairyland; coming back thence all the more lovingly disposed towards the human home from which he had escaped for a while.'

"'Oh, my children,' interposed the preacher earnestly, 'the wings would be given to us in vain if we did not obey the instinct which allures us to soar; vain, no less, would be the soaring, were it not towards the home whence we came, bearing back from its native airs a stronger health, and a serener joy; more reconciled to the duties of earth by every new flight into Heaven.'

"As he thus completed the moral of Lily's fairy tale, the girl rose from her low seat, took his hand, kissed it reverently, and walked away towards the window. I could see that she was affected even to tears, which she sought to conceal. Later in the evening, when we were dispersed on the lawn, for a few minutes before the party broke up, Lily came to my side timidly and said, in a low whisper:

"'Are you angry with me? what have I done to displease you?'

"'Angry with you; displeased? How can you think of me so unjustly?'

“‘It is so many days since you have called, since I have seen you,’ she said so artlessly, looking up at me with eyes in which tears still seemed to tremble.

“Before I could trust myself to reply, her aunt approached, and noticing me with a cold and distant ‘Good-night,’ led away her niece.

“I had calculated on walking back to their home with them, as I generally have done when we met at another house. But the aunt had probably conjectured I might be at the vicarage that evening, and in order to frustrate my intention had engaged a carriage for their return. No doubt she has been warned against permitting further intimacy with her niece.

“My father, I must come to you at once, discharge my promise, and receive from your own lips your consent to my choice; for you will consent, will you not? But I wish you to be prepared beforehand, and I shall therefore put up these disjointed fragments of my commune with my own heart and with yours, and post them to-morrow. Expect me to follow them after leaving you a day free to consider them alone—alone, my dear father; they are meant for no eye but yours.

K. C.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE next day Kenelm walked into the town, posted his voluminous letter to Sir Peter, and then looked in at the shop of Will Somers, meaning to make some purchases of basket-work or trifling fancy goods in Jessie’s pretty store of such articles, that might please the taste of his mother.

On entering the shop his heart beat quicker. He saw two young forms bending over the counter, examining the contents of a glass case. One of these customers was Clemmy; in the other there was no mistaking the slight graceful shape of Lily Mordaunt. Clemmy was exclaiming, “Oh, it is so pretty, Mrs. Somers! but,” turning her eyes from the counter to a silk purse in her hand, she added sorrowfully, “I can’t buy it. I have not got enough, not by a great deal.”

"And what is it, Miss Clemmy?" asked Kenelm.

The two girls turned round at his voice and Clemmy's face brightened.

"Look here," she said, "is it not too lovely?"

The object thus admired and coveted was a little gold locket, enriched by a cross composed of small pearls.

"I assure you, miss," said Jessie, who had acquired all the coaxing arts of her trade, "it is really a great bargain. Miss Mary Burrows, who was here just before you came, bought one not nearly so pretty and gave ten shillings more for it."

Miss Mary Burrows was the same age as Miss Clementina Emlyn, and there was a rivalry as to smartness between those youthful beauties. "Miss Burrows!" sighed Clemmy, very scornfully.

But Kenelm's attention was distracted from Clemmy's locket to a little ring which Lily had been persuaded by Mrs. Somers to try on, and which she now drew on and returned with a shake of the head. Mrs. Somers, who saw that she had small chance of selling the locket to Clemmy, was now addressing herself to the elder girl more likely to have sufficient pocket-money, and whom, at all events, it was quite safe to trust.

"The ring fits you so nicely, Miss Mordaunt, and every young lady of your age wears at least one ring; allow me to put it up." She added in a lower voice, "Though we only sell the articles in this case on commission, it is all the same to us whether we are paid now or at Christmas."

"'Tis no use tempting me, Mrs. Somers," said Lily, laughing, and then with a grave air, "I promised Lion, I mean my guardian, never to run into debt, and I never will."

Lily turned resolutely from the perilous counter, taking up a paper that contained a new ribbon she had bought for Blanche, and Clemmy reluctantly followed her out of the shop.

Kenelm lingered behind and selected very hastily a few trifles, to be sent to him that evening with some specimens of basket-work left to Will's tasteful discretion; then purchased the locket on which Clemmy had set her heart; but all the while his thoughts were fixed on the ring which Lily had tried on. It was no sin against etiquette to give the locket to

a child like Clemmy, but would it not be a cruel impertinence to offer a gift to Lily?

Jessie spoke:

"Miss Mordaunt took a great fancy to this ring, Mr. Chillingly: I am sure her aunt would like her to have it. I have a great mind to put it by on the chance of Mrs. Cameron's calling here. It would be a pity if it were bought by some one else."

"I think," said Kenelm, "that I will take the liberty of showing it to Mrs. Cameron. No doubt she will buy it for her niece. Add the price of it to my bill." He seized the ring and carried it off; a very poor little simple ring, with a single stone shaped as a heart, not half the price of the locket.

Kenelm rejoined the young ladies just where the path split into two, the one leading direct to Grasmere, the other through the churchyard to the Vicarage. He presented the locket to Clemmy with brief kindly words which easily removed any scruple she might have had in accepting it; and, delighted with her acquisition, she bounded off to the Vicarage, impatient to show the prize to her mamma and sisters, and more especially to Miss Mary Burrows, who was coming to lunch with them.

Kenelm walked on slowly by Lily's side.

"You have a good heart, Mr. Chillingly," said she, somewhat abruptly. "How it must please you to give such pleasure! Dear little Clemmy!"

This artless praise, and the perfect absence of envy or thought of self evinced by her joy that her friend's wish was gratified, though her own was not, enchanted Kenelm.

"If it pleases to give pleasure," said he, "it is your turn to be pleased now; you can confer such pleasure upon me."

"How?" she asked, falteringly, and with quick change of colour.

"By conceding to me the same right your little friend has allowed."

And he drew forth the ring.

Lily reared her head with a first impulse of haughtiness. But when her eyes met his the head drooped down again, and a slight shiver ran through her frame.

"Miss Mordaunt," resumed Kenelm, mastering his passionate longing to fall at her feet and say, "But, oh! in this ring it is my love that I offer—it is my troth that I pledge!" "Miss Mordaunt spare me the misery of thinking that I have offended you; least of all would I do so on this day, for it may be some little while before I see you again. I am going home for a few days upon a matter which may affect the happiness of my life, and on which I should be a bad son and an unworthy gentleman if I did not consult him who, in all that concerns my affections, has trained me to turn to him, the father; in all that concerns my honour to him, the gentleman."

A speech more unlike that which any delineator of manners and morals in the present day would put into the mouth of a lover, no critic in *The Londoner* could ridicule. But, somehow or other, this poor little tamer of butterflies and teller of fairy tales comprehended on the instant all that this most eccentric of human beings thus frigidly left untold. Into her innermost heart it sank more deeply than would the most ardent declaration put into the lips of the boobies or the scamps in whom delineators of manners in the present day too often debase the magnificent chivalry embodied in the name of "Lover."

Where these two had, while speaking, halted on the path along the brookside, there was a bench, on which it so happened that they had seated themselves weeks before. A few moments later on that bench they were seated again.

And the trumpery little ring with its turquoise heart was on Lily's finger, and there they continued to sit for nearly half an hour; not talking much, but wondrously happy; not a single vow of troth interchanged. No, not even a word that could be construed into "I love." And yet when they rose from the bench, and went silently along the brookside, each knew that the other was beloved.

When they reached the gate that admitted into the garden of Grasmere, Kenelm made a slight start. Mrs. Cameron was leaning over the gate. Whatever alarm at the appearance Kenelm might have felt was certainly not shared by Lily; she advanced lightly before him, kissed her aunt on the cheek,

and passed on across the lawn with a bound in her step and the carol of a song upon her lips.

Kenelm remained by the gate, face to face with Mrs. Cameron. She opened the gate, put her arm in his, and led him back along the brook side.

"I am sure, Mr. Chillingly," she said, "that you will not impute to my words any meaning more grave than that which I wish them to convey, when I remind you that there is no place too obscure to escape from the ill-nature of gossip, and you must own that my niece incurs the chance of its notice if she be seen walking alone in these by-paths with a man of your age and position, and whose sojourn in the neighbourhood, without any ostensible object or motive, has already begun to excite conjecture. I do not for a moment assume that you regard my niece in any other light than that of an artless child, whose originality of tastes of fancy may serve to amuse you; and still less do I suppose that she is in danger of misrepresenting any attentions on your part. But for her sake I am bound to consider what others may say. Excuse me then if I add that I think you are also bound in honour and in good feeling to do the same. Mr. Chillingly, it would give me a great sense of relief if it suited your plans to move from the neighbourhood."

"My dear Mrs. Cameron," answered Kenelm, who had listened to this speech with imperturbable calm of visage; "I thank you much for your candour, and I am glad to have this opportunity of informing you that I am about to move from this neighbourhood, with the hope of returning to it in a very few days and rectifying your mistake as to the point of view in which I regard your niece. In a word," here the expression of his countenance and the tone of his voice underwent a sudden change, "it is the dearest wish of my heart to be empowered by my parents to assure you of the warmth with which they will welcome your niece as their daughter, should she deign to listen to my suit and intrust me with the charge of her happiness."

Mrs. Cameron stopped short, gazing into his face with a look of inexpressible dismay.

"No! Mr. Chillingly," she exclaimed, "this must not be—cannot be. Put out of your mind an idea so wild. A young man's senseless romance. Your parents cannot consent to your union with my niece; I tell you beforehand they cannot."

"But why?" asked Kenelm, with a slight smile, and not much impressed by the vehemence of Mrs. Cameron's adjuration.

"Why?" she repeated passionately; and then recovering something of her habitual weariness of quiet. "The why is easily explained. Mr. Kenelm Chillingly is the heir of a very ancient house and, I am told, of considerable estates. Lily Mordaunt is a nobody, an orphan, without fortune, without connection, the ward of a humbly born artist, to whom she owes the roof that shelters her; she is without the ordinary education of a gentlewoman; she has seen nothing of the world in which you move. Your parents have not the right to allow a son so young as yourself to throw himself out of his proper sphere by a rash and imprudent alliance. And, never would I consent, never would Walter Melville consent, to her entering into any family reluctant to receive her. There—that is enough. Dismiss the notion so lightly entertained. And farewell."

"Madam," answered Kenelm very earnestly, "believe me, that had I not entertained the hope approaching to conviction that the reasons you urge against my presumption will not have the weight with my parents which you ascribe to them, I should not have spoken to you thus frankly. Young though I be, still I might fairly claim the right to choose for myself in marriage. But I gave to my father a very binding promise that I would not formally propose to any one till I had acquainted him with my desire to do so, and obtained his approval of my choice; and he is the last man in the world who would withhold that approval where my heart is set on it as it is now. I want no fortune with a wife, and should I ever care to advance my position in the world, no connection would help me like the approving smile of the woman I love. There is but one qualification which my parents would deem they had the right to exact from my choice of one who is to bear our name. I mean that she should have the appearance, the manners, the principles—and

my mother at least might add—the birth of a gentlewoman. Well, as to appearance and manners, I have seen much of fine society from my boyhood, and found no one among the highest born who can excel the exquisite refinement of every look, and the inborn delicacy of every thought, in her of whom, if mine, I shall be as proud as I shall be fond. As to defects in the frippery and tinsel of a boarding-school education, they are very soon remedied. Remains only the last consideration—birth. Mrs. Braefield informs me that you have assured her that, though circumstances into which as yet I have no right to inquire, have made her the ward of a man of humble origin, Miss Mordaunt is of gentle birth. Do you deny that?”

“No,” said Mrs. Cameron, hesitating, but with a flash of pride in her eyes as she went on. “No. I cannot deny that my niece is descended from those who, in point of birth, were not unequal to your own ancestors. But what of that?” she added, with a bitter despondency of tone. “Equality of birth ceases when one falls into poverty, obscurity, neglect, nothingness!”

“Really this is a morbid habit on your part. But since we have thus spoken so confidentially, will you not empower me to answer the question which will probably be put to me, and the answer to which will, I doubt not, remove every obstacle in the way of my happiness. Whatever the reasons which might very sufficiently induce you to preserve, whilst living so quietly in this place, a discreet silence as to the parentage of Miss Mordaunt and your own—and I am well aware that those whom altered circumstances of fortune have compelled to altered modes of life, may disdain to parade to strangers the pretensions to a higher station than that to which they reconcile their habits—whatever, I say, such reasons for silence to strangers, should they preclude you from confiding to me, an aspirant to your niece’s hand, a secret which, after all, cannot be concealed from her future husband?”

“From her future husband? of course not,” answered Mrs. Cameron. “But I decline to be questioned by one whom I may never see again, and of whom I know so little. I decline, indeed, to assist in removing any obstacle to a union with my niece, which I hold to be in every way unsuited to either party. I

have no cause even to believe that my niece would accept you if you were free to propose to her. You have not, I presume, spoken to her as an aspirant to her hand. You have not addressed to her any declaration of your attachment, or sought to extract from her inexperience any words that warrant you in thinking that her heart will break if she never sees you again."

"I do not merit such cruel and taunting questions," said Kenelm, indignantly. "But I will say no more now. When we again meet let me hope you will treat me less unkindly. Adieu!"

"Stay, sir. A word or two more. You persist in asking your father and Lady Chillingly to consent to your proposal to Miss Mordaunt?"

"Certainly I do."

"And you will promise me, on your word as a gentleman, to state fairly all the causes which might fairly operate against their consent; the poverty, the humble rearing, the imperfect education of my niece; so that they might not hereafter say you had entrapped their consent, and avenge themselves for your deceit by contempt for her?"

"Ah, madam, madam, you really try my patience too far. But take my promise, if you can hold that of value from one whom you can suspect of deliberate deceit."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Chillingly. Bear with my rudeness. I have been so taken by surprise, I scarcely know what I am saying. But let us understand each other completely before we part. If your parents withhold their consent you will communicate it to me; me only, not to Lily. I repeat I know nothing of the state of her affections. But it might embitter any girl's life to be led on to love one whom she could not marry."

"It shall be as you say. But if they do consent?"

"Then you will speak to me before you seek an interview with Lily, for then comes another question: Will her guardian consent?—and—and——"

"And what?"

"No matter. I rely on your honour in this request, as in all else. Good-day."

She turned back with hurried footsteps, muttering to herself, "But they will not consent. Heaven grant that they will not consent, or if they do, what—what is to be said or done? Oh, that Walter Melville were here, or that I knew where to write to him!"

On his way back to Cromwell lodge, Kenelm was overtaken by the vicar.

"I was coming to you, my dear Mr. Chillingly, first to thank you for the very pretty present with which you have gladdened the heart of my little Clemmy, and next to ask you to come with me quietly to-day to meet Mr.—, the celebrated antiquarian, who came to Moleswich this morning at my request to examine that old Gothic tomb in our churchyard. Only think—though he cannot read the inscription any better than we can, he knows all about its history. It seems that a young knight renowned for feats of valour in the reign of Henry IV. married a daughter of one of those great Earls of Montfichet who were then the most powerful family in these parts. He was slain in defending the church from an assault by some disorderly rioters of the Lollard faction; he fell on the very spot where the tomb is now placed. That accounts for its situation in the churchyard, not within the fabric. Mr. — discovered this fact in an old memoir of the ancient and once famous family to which the young knight Albert belonged, and which came, alas! to so shameful an end, the Fletwodes, Barons of Fletwode and Malpas. What a triumph over pretty Lily Mordaunt, who always chose to imagine that the tomb must be that of some heroine of her own romantic invention! Do come to dinner; Mr. — is a most agreeable man, and full of interesting anecdotes."

"I am so sorry I cannot. I am obliged to return home at once for a few days. That old family of Fletwode! I think I see before me while we speak, the grey tower in which they once held sway; and the last of the race following Mammon along the Progress of the Age—a convicted felon! What a terrible satire on the pride of birth!"

Kenelm left Cromwell Lodge that evening, but he still kept on his apartments there, saying he might be back unexpectedly any day in the course of the next week.

He remained two days in London, wishing all that he had communicated to Sir Peter in writing to sink into his father's heart before a personal appeal to it.

The more he revolved the ungracious manner in which Mrs. Cameron had received his confidence, the less importance he attached to it. An exaggerated sense of disparities of fortune in a person who appeared to him to have the pride so common to those who have known better days, coupled with a nervous apprehension lest his family should ascribe to her any attempt to ensnare a very young man of considerable worldly pretensions into a marriage with a penniless niece, seemed to account for much that had at first perplexed and angered him. And if, as he conjectured, Mrs. Cameron had once held a much higher position in the world than she did now—a conjecture warranted by a certain peculiar conventional undeniable elegance which characterised her habitual manner—and was now, as she implied, actually a dependant on the bounty of a painter who had only just acquired some professional distinction, she might well shrink from the mortification of becoming an object of compassion to her richer neighbours; nor, when he came to think of it, had he any more right than those neighbours to any confidence as to her own or Lily's parentage, so long as he was not formally entitled to claim admission into her privacy.

London seemed to him intolerably dull and wearisome. He called nowhere except at Lady Glenalvon's: he was glad to hear from the servants that she was still at Exmundham. He relied much on the influence of the queen of the fashion with his mother, whom he knew would be more difficult to persuade than Sir Peter, nor did he doubt that he should win to his side that sympathising and warm-hearted queen.

CHAPTER VII.

IT is somewhere about three weeks since the party invited by Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly assembled at Exmundham, and they are still there, though people invited to a country house have seldom compassion enough for the dulness of its owner to stay more than three days. Mr. Chillingly Mivers, indeed, had not exceeded that orthodox limit. Quietly observant, during his stay, of young Gordon's manner towards Cecilia, and hers towards him, he had satisfied himself that there was no cause to alarm Sir Peter, or induce the worthy baronet to regret the invitation he had given to that clever kinsman. For all the visitors remaining, Exmundham had a charm.

To Lady Glenalvon, because in the hostess she met her most familiar friend when both were young girls, and because it pleased her to note the interest which Cecilia Travers took in the place so associated with memories of the man to whom it was Lady Glenalvon's hope to see her united. To Gordon Chillingly, because no opportunity could be so favourable for his own well-concealed designs on the hand and heart of the heiress. To the heiress herself the charm needs no explanation.

To Leopold Travers the attractions of Exmundham were unquestionably less fascinating. Still even he was well pleased to prolong his stay. His active mind found amusement in wandering over an estate the acreage of which would have warranted a much larger rental, and lecturing Sir Peter on the old-fashioned system of husbandry which that good-natured easy proprietor permitted his tenants to adopt, as well as on the number of superfluous hands that were employed on the pleasure-grounds and in the general management of the estate, such as carpenters, sawyers, woodmen, bricklayers, and smiths.

When the squire said, "You could do just as well with a third of those costly dependants," Sir Peter, unconsciously plagiarising the answer of the old French grand seigneur, replied, "Very

likely. But the question is, could the rest do just as well without me?"

Exmundham, indeed, was a very expensive place to keep up. The house, built by some ambitious Chillingly three centuries ago, would have been large for an owner of thrice the revenues; and though the flower-garden was smaller than that at Braefieldville, there were paths and drives through miles of young plantations and old woodlands that furnished lazy occupation to an army of labourers. No wonder that, despite his nominal ten thousand a-year, Sir Peter was far from being a rich man. Exmundham devoured at least half the rental. The active mind of Leopold Travers also found ample occupation in the stores of his host's extensive library. Travers, never much of a reader, was by no means a despiser of learning, and he soon took to historical and archæological researches with the ardour of a man who must always throw energy into any pursuit that occasion presents as an escape from indolence. Indolent, Leopold Travers never could be. But, more than either of these resources of occupation, the companionship of Chillingly Gordon excited his interest and quickened the current of his thoughts. Always fond of renewing his own youth in the society of the young, and of the sympathising temperament which belongs to cordial natures, he had, as we have seen, entered very heartily into the ambition of George Belvoir, and reconciled himself very pliantly to the humours of Kenelm Chillingly. But the first of these two was a little too commonplace, the second a little too eccentric, to enlist the complete good-fellowship which, being alike very clever and very practical, Leopold Travers established with that very clever and very practical representative of the rising generation, Chillingly Gordon. Between them there was this meeting ground, political and worldly, a great contempt for innocuous old-fashioned notions; added to which, in the mind of Leopold Travers, was a contempt—which would have been complete, but that the contempt admitted dread—of harmful new-fashioned notions which, interpreted by his thoughts, threatened ruin to his country and downfall to the follies of existent society, and which, interpreted by his language, tamed itself into the man of the world's phrase, "Going too far for

me." Notions which, by the much more cultivated intellect and the immeasurably more soaring ambition of Chillingly Gordon, might be viewed and criticised thus: "Could I accept these doctrines? I don't see my way to being Prime Minister of a country in which religion and capital are still powers to be consulted. And, putting aside religion and capital, I don't see how, if these doctrines passed into law, with a good coat on my back I should not be a sufferer. Either I, as having a good coat, should have it torn off my back as a capitalist, or, if I remonstrated in the name of moral honesty, be put to death as a religionist."

Therefore when Leopold Travers said, "Of course we must go on," Chillingly Gordon smiled and answered, "Certainly, go on." And when Leopold Travers added, "But we may go too far," Chillingly Gordon shook his head, and replied, "How true that is! Certainly too far."

Apart from the congeniality of political sentiment, there were other points of friendly contact between the older and younger man. Each was an exceedingly pleasant man of the world; and, though Leopold Travers could not have plumbed certain deeps in Chillingly Gordon's nature—and in every man's nature there are deeps which his ablest observer cannot fathom—yet he was not wrong when he said to himself, "Gordon is a gentleman."

Utterly would my readers misconceive that very clever young man, if they held him to be a hypocrite like Blifil or Joseph Surface. Chillingly Gordon, in every private sense of the word, was a gentleman. If he had staked his whole fortune on a rubber at whist, and an undetected glance at his adversary's hand would have made the difference between loss and gain, he would have turned away his head and said, "Hold up your cards." Neither, as I have had occasion to explain before, was he actuated by any motive in common with the vulgar fortune-hunter in his secret resolve to win the hand of the heiress. He recognised no inequality of worldly gifts between them. He said to himself, "Whatever she may give me in money, I shall amply repay in worldly position if I succeed, and succeed I certainly shall. If I were as rich as Lord

Westminster, and still cared about being Prime Minister, I should select her as the most fitting woman I have seen for a Prime Minister's wife."

It must be acknowledged that this sort of self-commune, if not that of a very ardent lover, is very much that of a sensible man setting high value on himself, bent on achieving the prizes of a public career, and desirous of securing in his wife a woman who would adorn the station to which he confidently aspired. In fact, no one so able as Chillingly Gordon would ever have conceived the ambition of being Minister of England if, in all that, in private life, constitutes the English gentleman, he could be fairly subject to reproach.

He was but in public life what many a gentleman honest in private life has been before him, an ambitious, resolute egotist, by no means without personal affections, but holding them all subordinate to the objects of personal ambition, and with no more of other principle than that of expediency in reference to his own career, than would cover a silver penny. But expediency in itself he deemed the statesman's only rational principle. And to the consideration of expediency he brought a very unprejudiced intellect, quite fitted to decide whether the public opinion of a free and enlightened people was for turning St. Paul's Cathedral into an Agapemone or not.

During the summer weeks he had thus vouchsafed to the turfs and groves of Exmundham, Leopold Travers was not the only person whose good opinion Chillingly Gordon had ingratiated. He had won the warmest approbation from Mrs. Champion. His conversation reminded her of that which she had enjoyed in the house of her departed spouse. In talking with Cecilia she was fond of contrasting him to Kenelm, not to the favour of the latter, whose humours she utterly failed to understand, and whom she pertinaciously described as "so affected." "A most superior young man Mr. Gordon, so well informed, so sensible, above all, so natural." Such was her judgment upon the unavowed candidate to Cecilia's hand; and Mrs. Champion required no avowal to divine the candidature. Even Lady Glenalvon had begun to take friendly interest in the fortunes of this

promising young man. Most women can sympathise with youthful ambition. He impressed her with a deep conviction of his abilities, and still more with respect for their concentration upon practical objects of power and renown. She too, like Mrs. Champion, began to draw comparisons unfavourable to Kenelm between the two cousins; the one who seemed so slothfully determined to hide his candle under a bushel, the other so honestly disposed to set his light before men. She felt also annoyed and angry that Kenelm was thus absenting himself from the paternal home at the very time of her first visit to it, and when he had so felicitous an opportunity of seeing more of the girl in whom he knew that Lady Glenalvon deemed he might win, if he would properly woo, the wife that would best suit him. So that when one day Mrs. Champion, walking through the gardens alone with Lady Glenalvon while from the gardens into the park went Chillingly Gordon, arm-in-arm with Leopold Travers, abruptly asked, "Don't you think that Mr. Gordon is smitten with Cecilia, though he, with his moderate fortune, does not dare to say so? And don't you think that any girl, if she were as rich as Cecilia will be, would be more proud of such a husband as Chillingly Gordon than of some silly earl?"

Lady Glenalvon answered curtly, but somewhat sorrowfully—"Yes."

After a pause she added, "There *is* a man with whom I did once think she would have been happier than with any other. One man who ought to be dearer to me than Mr. Gordon, for he saved the life of my son, and who, though perhaps less clever than Mr. Gordon, still has a great deal of talent within him, which might come forth and make him—what shall I say?—a useful and distinguished member of society, if married to a girl so sure of raising any man she marries as Cecilia Travers. But if I am to renounce that hope, and look through the range of young men brought under my notice, I don't know one, putting aside consideration of rank and fortune, I should prefer for a clever daughter who went heart and soul with the ambition of a clever man. But, Mrs. Champion, I have not yet quite renounced my hope;

and, unless I do, I yet think there is one man to whom I would rather give Cecilia, if she were my daughter."

Therewith Lady Glenalvon so decidedly broke off the subject of conversation, that Mrs. Campion could not have renewed it without such a breach of the female etiquette of good breeding as Mrs. Campion was the last person to adventure.

Lady Chillingly could not help being pleased with Gordon. He was light in hand, served to amuse her guests, and made up a rubber of whist in case of need.

There were two persons, however, with whom Gordon made no ground, viz., Parson John and Sir Peter. When Travers praised him one day for the solidity of his parts and the soundness of his judgment, the Parson replied snappishly, "Yes, solid and sound as one of those tables you buy at a broker's; the thickness of the varnish hides the defects in the joints; the whole framework is rickety." But when the Parson was indignantly urged to state the reason by which he arrived at so harsh a conclusion, he could only reply by an assertion which seemed to his questioner a declamatory burst of parsonic intolerance.

"Because," said Parson John, "he has no love for man, and no reverence for God. And no character is sound and solid which enlarges its surface at the expense of its supports."

On the other hand, the favour with which Sir Peter had at first regarded Gordon gradually vanished, in proportion as, acting on the hint Mivers had originally thrown out but did not deem it necessary to repeat, he watched the pains which the young man took to insinuate himself into the good graces of Mr. Travers and Mrs. Campion, and the artful and half-suppressed gallantry of his manner to the heiress.

Perhaps Gordon had not ventured thus "to feel his way" till after Mivers had departed; or perhaps Sir Peter's parental anxiety rendered him, in this instance, a shrewder observer than was the man of the world, whose natural acuteness was, in matters of affection, not unfrequently rendered languid by his acquired philosophy of indifferentism.

More and more every day, every hour, of her sojourn beneath his roof, did Cecilia become dearer to Sir Peter, and

stronger and stronger became his wish to secure her for his daughter-in-law. He was inexpressibly flattered by her preference for his company; ever at hand to share his customary walks, his kindly visits to the cottages of peasants, or the homesteads of petty tenants; wherein both were sure to hear many a simple anecdote of Master Kenelm in his childhood, anecdotes of whim or good nature, of considerate pity or reckless courage.

Throughout all these varieties of thought or feeling in the social circle around her, Lady Chillingly preserved the unmoved calm of her dignified position. A very good woman certainly, and very ladylike. No one could detect a flaw in her character, or a fold awry in her flounce. She was only like the gods of Epicurus, too good to trouble her serene existence with the cares of us simple mortals. Not that she was without a placid satisfaction in the tribute which the world laid upon her altars; nor was she so supremely goddess-like as to soar above the household affections which humanity entails on the dwellers and denizens of earth. She liked her husband as much as most elderly wives like their elderly husbands. She bestowed upon Kenelm a liking somewhat more warm, and mingled with compassion. His eccentricities would have puzzled her, if she had allowed herself to be puzzled; it troubled her less to pity them. She did not share her husband's desire for his union with Cecilia. She thought that her son would have a higher place in the county if he married Lady Jane, the Duke of Clanville's daughter; and "that is what he ought to do," said Lady Chillingly to herself. She entertained none of the fear that had induced Sir Peter to extract from Kenelm the promise not to pledge his hand before he had received his father's consent. That the son of Lady Chillingly should make a *mésalliance*, however crotchety he might be in other respects, was a thought that it would have so disturbed her to admit, that she did not admit it.

Such was the condition of things at Exmundham, when the lengthy communication of Kenelm reached Sir Peter's hands.

BOOK VIII.



CHAPTER I.

NEVER in his whole life had the mind of Sir Peter been so agitated as it was during, and after the perusal of Kenelm's flighty composition. He had received it at the breakfast-table, and, opening it eagerly, ran his eye hastily over the contents, till he very soon arrived at sentences which appalled him. Lady Chillingly, who was fortunately busied at the tea-urn, did not observe the dismay on his countenance. It was visible only to Cecilia and to Gordon. Neither guessed who that letter was from.

"No bad news, I hope," said Cecilia, softly.

"Bad news," echoed Sir Peter. "No, my dear, no ; a letter on business. It seems terribly long," and he thrust the packet into his pocket, muttering, "see to it by and by."

"That slovenly farmer of yours, Mr. Nostock, has failed, I suppose," said Mr. Travers, looking up and observing a quiver on his host's lip. "I told you he would—a fine farm too. Let me choose you another tenant."

Sir Peter shook his head with a wan smile.

"Nostock will not fail. There have been six generations of Nostocks on the farm."

"So I should guess," said Travers, drily.

"And—and," faltered Sir Peter, "if the last of the race fails, he must lean upon me, and—if one of the two break down—it shall not be——"

"Shall not be that cross-cropping blockhead, my dear Sir Peter. This is carrying benevolence too far."

Here the tact and *savoir vivre* of Chillingly Gordon came to the rescue of the host. Possessing himself of the *Times* newspaper, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, genuine or simulated, and read aloud an extract from the leading article, announcing an impending change in the Cabinet.

As soon as he could quit the breakfast-table, Sir Peter hurried into his library and there gave himself up to the study of Kenelm's unwelcome communication. The task took him long, for he stopped at intervals, overcome by the struggle of his heart, now melted into sympathy with the passionate eloquence of a son hitherto so free from amorous romance, and now sorrowing for the ruin of his own cherished hopes. This uneducated country girl would never be such a help-mate to a man like Kenelm, as would have been Cecilia Travers. At length, having finished the letter, he buried his head between his clasped hands, and tried hard to realise the situation that placed the father and son into such direct antagonism.

"But," he murmured, "after all it is the boy's happiness that must be consulted. If he will not be happy in my way, what right have I to say that he shall not be happy in his?"

Just then Cecilia came softly into the room. She had acquired the privilege of entering his library at will sometimes to choose a book of his recommendation, sometimes to direct and seal his letters—Sir Peter was grateful to any one who saved him an extra trouble—and sometimes, especially at this hour, to decoy him forth into his wonted constitutional walk.

He lifted his face at the sound of her approaching tread and her winning voice, and the face was so sad that the tears rushed to her eyes on seeing it. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and said pleadingly, "Dear Sir Peter, what is it—what is it?"

"Ah—ah, my dear," said Sir Peter, gathering up the scattered sheets of Kenelm's effusion with hurried, trembling hands. "Don't ask—don't talk of it; 'tis but one of the disappointments

that all of us must undergo, when we invest our hopes in the uncertain will of others."

Then, observing that the tears were trickling down the girl's fair, pale cheeks, he took her hand in both his, kissed her forehead, and said, whisperingly, "Pretty one, how good you have been to me! Heaven bless you. What a wife you will be to some man!"

Thus saying, he shambled out of the room through the open casement. She followed him impulsively, wonderingly; but before she reached his side he turned round, waved his hand with a gently repelling gesture, and went his way alone through dense fir-groves which had been planted in honour of Kenelm's birth.

CHAPTER II.

KENELM arrived at Exmundham just in time to dress for dinner. His arrival was not unexpected, for the morning after his father had received his communication, Sir Peter had said to Lady Chillingly "that he had heard from Kenelm to the effect that he might be down any day."

"Quite time he should come," said Lady Chillingly.

"Have you his letter about you?"

"No, my dear Caroline. Of course he sends you his kindest love, poor fellow."

"Why poor fellow? Has he been ill?"

"No; but there seems to be something on his mind. If so we must do what we can to relieve it. He is the best of sons, Caroline."

"I am sure I have nothing to say against him, except," added her Ladyship, reflectively, "that I do wish he were a little more like other young men."

"Hum—like Chillingly Gordon, for instance?"

"Well, yes; Mr. Gordon is a remarkably well-bred, sensible young man. How different from that disagreeable, bearish father of his, who went to law with you!"

"Very different indeed, but with just as much of the Chillingly blood in him. How the Chillinglys ever gave birth to a Kenelm is a question much more puzzling."

"Oh, my dear Sir Peter, don't be metaphysical. You know how I hate puzzles."

"And yet, Caroline, I have to thank you for a puzzle which I can never interpret by my brain. There are a great many puzzles in human nature which can only be interpreted by the heart."

"Very true," said Lady Chillingly. "I suppose Kenelm is to have his old room, just opposite to Mr. Gordon's."

"Ay—ay, just opposite. Opposite they will be all their lives. Only think, Caroline, I have made a discovery!"

"Dear me! I hope not. Your discoveries are generally very expensive, and bring us in contact with such very odd people."

"This discovery shall not cost us a penny, and I don't know any people so odd as not to comprehend it. Briefly it is this: To genius the first requisite is heart; it is no requisite at all to talent. My dear Caroline, Gordon has as much talent as any young man I know, but he wants the first requisite of genius. I am not by any means sure that Kenelm has genius, but there is no doubt that he has the first requisite of genius—heart. Heart is a very perplexing, wayward, irrational thing; and that perhaps accounts for the general incapacity to comprehend genius, while any fool can comprehend talent. My dear Caroline, you know that it is very seldom, not more than once in three years, that I presume to have a will of my own against a will of yours; but should there come a question in which our son's heart is concerned, then (speaking between ourselves) my will must govern yours."

"Sir Peter is growing more odd every day," said Lady Chillingly to herself when left alone. "But he does not mean ill, and there are worse husbands in the world."

Therewith she rang for her maid, gave requisite orders for the preparing of Kenelm's room, which had not been slept in for many months, and then consulted that functionary as to the adaptation of some dress of hers, too costly to be laid aside,

to the style of some dress less costly which Lady Glenalvon had imported from Paris as *la dernière mode*.

On the very day on which Kenelm arrived at Exmundham, Chillingly Gordon had received this letter from Mr. Gerald Danvers.

“DEAR GORDON,—In the ministerial changes announced as rumour in the public papers, and which you may accept as certain, that sweet little cherub — is to be sent to sit up aloft and pray there for the life of poor Jack—viz., of the government he leaves below. In accepting the peerage, which I persuaded him to do, — creates a vacancy for the borough of —, just the place for you, far better in every way than Saxborough. — promises to recommend you to his committee. Come to town at once.—Yours, &c.

“G. DANVERS.”

Gordon showed this letter to Mr. Travers, and, on receiving the hearty good wishes of that gentleman, said, with emotion partly genuine, partly assumed, “You cannot guess all that the realisation of your good wishes would be. Once in the House of Commons, and my motives for action are so strong that—do not think me very conceited if I count upon Parliamentary success.”

“My dear Gordon, I am as certain of your success as I am of my own existence.”

“Should I succeed—should the great prizes of public life be within my reach—should I lift myself into a position that would warrant my presumption, do you think I could come to you and say, ‘There is an object of ambition dearer to me than power and office—the hope of attaining which was the strongest of all my motives of action? And in that hope shall I also have the good wishes of the father of Cecilia Travers?’”

“My dear fellow, give me your hand; you speak manfully and candidly as a gentleman should speak. I answer in the same spirit. I don’t pretend to say that I have not entertained views for Cecilia which included hereditary rank and established fortune in a suitor to her hand, though I never should have made

them imperative conditions. I am neither potentate nor *parvenu* enough for that; and I can never forget" (here every muscle in the man's face twitched) "that I myself married for love, and was so happy. How happy Heaven only knows! Still, if you had thus spoken a few weeks ago, I should not have replied very favourably to your question. But now that I have seen so much of you, my answer is this: If you lose your election—if you don't come into Parliament at all, you have my good wishes all the same. If you win my daughter's heart, there is no man on whom I would more willingly bestow her hand. There she is, by herself too, in the garden. Go and talk to her."

Gordon hesitated. He knew too well that he had not won her heart, though he had no suspicion that it was given to another. And he was much too clever not to know also how much he hazards, who, in affairs of courtship, is premature.

"Ah!" he said, "I cannot express my gratitude for words so generous, encouragement so cheering. But I have never yet dared to utter to Miss Travers a word that would prepare her even to harbour a thought of me as a suitor. And I scarcely think I should have the courage to go through this election with the grief of her rejection on my heart."

"Well, go in and win the election first; meanwhile, at all events, take leave of Cecilia."

Gordon left his friend, and joined Miss Travers, resolved not indeed to risk a formal declaration, but to sound his way to his chances of acceptance.

The interview was very brief. He did sound his way skilfully, and felt it very unsafe for his footsteps. The advantage of having gained the approval of the father was too great to be lost altogether, by one of these decided answers on the part of the daughter which allow of no appeal, especially to a poor gentleman who woos an heiress.

He returned to Travers, and said simply, "I bear with me her good wishes as well as yours. That is all. I leave myself in your kind hands."

Then he hurried away to take leave of his host and hostess, say a few significant words to the ally he had already gained in Mrs. Campion, and within an hour was on his road to London,

passing on his way the train that bore Kenelm to Exmundham. Gordon was in high spirits. At least he felt as certain of winning Cecilia as he did of winning his election.

"I have never yet failed in what I desired," said he to himself, "because I have ever taken pains not to fail."

The cause of Gordon's sudden departure created a great excitement in that quiet circle, shared by all except Cecilia and Sir Peter.

CHAPTER III.

KENELM did not see either father or mother till he appeared at dinner. Then he was seated next to Cecilia. There was but little conversation between the two; in fact, the prevalent subject of talk was general and engrossing, the interest in Chillingly Gordon's election; predictions of his success, of what he would do in Parliament. "Where," said Lady Glenalvon, "there is such a dearth of rising young men, that if he were only half as clever as he is he would be a gain."

"A gain to what?" asked Sir Peter, testily. "To his country? about which I don't believe he cares a brass button."

To this assertion Leopold Travers replied warmly, and was not less warmly backed by Mrs. Campion.

"For my part," said Lady Glenalvon, in conciliatory accents, "I think every able man in Parliament is a gain to the country; and he may not serve his country less effectively because he does not boast of his love for it. The politicians I dread most are those so rampant in France nowadays, the bawling patriots. When Sir Robert Walpole said, 'All those men have their price,' he pointed to the men who called themselves 'patriots.'"

"Bravo!" cried Travers.

"Sir Robert Walpole showed his love for his country by corrupting it. There are many ways besides bribing for corrupting a country," said Kenelm, mildly, and that was Kenelm's sole contribution to the general conversation.

It was not till the rest of the party had retired to rest that the conference, longed for by Kenelm, dreaded by Sir Peter, took place in the library. It lasted deep into the night; both parted with lightened hearts and a fonder affection for each other. Kenelm had drawn so charming a picture of the Fairy, and so thoroughly convinced Sir Peter that his own feelings towards her were those of no passing youthful fancy, but of that love which has its roots in the innermost heart, that though it was still with a sigh, a deep sigh, that he dismissed the thought of Cecilia, Sir Peter did dismiss it; and, taking comfort at last from the positive assurance that Lily was of gentle birth, and the fact that her name of Mordaunt was that of ancient and illustrious houses, said, with half a smile, "It might have been worse, my dear boy. I began to be afraid that, in spite of the teachings of Mivers and Welby, it was 'The Miller's Daughter,' after all. But we still have a difficult task to persuade your poor mother. In covering your first flight from our roof I unluckily put into her head the notion of Lady Jane, a duke's daughter, and the notion has never got out of it. That comes of fibbing."

"I count on Lady Glenalvon's influence on my mother in support of your own," said Kenelm. "If so accepted an oracle in the great world pronounce in my favour, and promise to present my wife at Court and bring her into fashion, I think that my mother will consent to allow us to reset the old family diamonds for her next reappearance in London. And then, too, you can tell her that I will stand for the county. I will go into Parliament, and if I meet there our clever cousin, and find that he does not care a brass button for the country, take my word for it, I will lick him more easily than I licked Tom Bowles."

"Tom Bowles! who is he?—ah! I remember some letter of yours in which you spoke of a Bowles, whose favourite study was mankind, a moral philosopher."

"Moral philosophers," answered Kenelm, "have so muddled their brains with the alcohol of new ideas that their moral legs have become shaky, and the humane would rather help them to bed than give them a licking. My Tom Bowles is a muscular

Christian, who became no less muscular, but much more Christian, after he was licked."

And in this pleasant manner these two oddities settled their conference, and went up to bed with arms wrapt round each other's shoulder.

CHAPTER IV.

KENELM found it a much harder matter to win Lady Glenalvon to his side than he had anticipated. With the strong interest she had taken in Kenelm's future, she could not but revolt from the idea of his union with an obscure portionless girl whom he had only known a few weeks, and of whose very parentage he seemed to know nothing, save an assurance that she was his equal in birth. And, with the desire, which she had cherished almost as fondly as Sir Peter, that Kenelm might win a bride in every way so worthy of his choice as Cecilia Travers, she felt not less indignant than regretful at the overthrow of her plans.

At first, indeed, she was so provoked that she would not listen to his pleadings. She broke away from him with a rudeness she had never exhibited to any one before, refused to grant him another interview in order to re-discuss the matter, and said that so far from using her influence in favour of his romantic folly, she would remonstrate well with Lady Chillingly and Sir Peter against yielding their assent to his "thus throwing himself away."

It was not till the third day after his arrival that, touched by the grave but haughty mournfulness of his countenance, she yielded to the arguments of Sir Peter in the course of a private conversation with that worthy baronet. Still it was reluctantly (she did not fulfil her threat of remonstrance with Lady Chillingly) that she conceded the point, that a son who, succeeding to the absolute fee simple of an estate, had volunteered the resettlement of it on terms singularly generous to both his parents, was entitled to some sacrifice of their inclinations on a

question in which he deemed his happiness vitally concerned ; and that he was of age to choose for himself, independently of their consent, but for a previous promise extracted from him by his father, a promise which, rigidly construed, was not extended to Lady Chillingly, but confined to Sir. Peter as the head of the family and master of the household. The father's consent was already given, and, if in his reverence for both parents Kenelm could not dispense with his mother's approval, surely it was the part of a true friend to remove every scruple from his conscience, and smooth away every obstacle to a love not to be condemned because it was disinterested.

After this conversation, Lady Glenalvon sought Kenelm, found him gloomily musing on the banks of the trout-stream, took his arm, led him into the sombre glades of the fir-grove, and listened patiently to all he had to say. Even then her woman's heart was not won to his reasonings, until he said pathetically, "You thanked me once for saving your son's life ; you said then that you could never repay me ; you can repay me tenfold. Could your son, who is now, we trust, in Heaven, look down and judge between us, do you think he would approve you if you refuse ?"

Then Lady Glenalvon wept, and took his hand, kissed his forehead as a mother might kiss it, and said, "You triumph ; I will go to Lady Chillingly at once. Marry her whom you so love, on one condition : marry her from my house."

Lady Glenalvon was not one of those women who serve a friend by halves. She knew well how to propitiate and reason down the apathetic temperament of Lady Chillingly ; she did not cease till that lady herself came into Kenelm's room, and said very quietly,

"So you are going to propose to Miss Mordaunt, the Warwickshire Mordaunts I suppose ? Lady Glenalvon says she is a very lovely girl, and will stay with her before the wedding. And as the young lady is an orphan, Lady Glenalvon's uncle the Duke, who is connected with the eldest branch of the Mordaunts, will give her away. It will be a very brilliant affair. I am sure I wish you happy ; it is time you should have sown your wild oats."

Two days after the consent thus formally given, Kenelm quitted Exmundham. Sir Peter would have accompanied him to pay his respects to the intended, but the agitation he had gone through brought on a sharp twinge of the gout, which consigned his feet to flannels.

After Kenelm had gone, Lady Glenalvon went into Cecilia's room. Cecilia was seated very desolately by the open window. She had detected that something of an anxious and painful nature had been weighing upon the minds of father and son, and had connected it with the letter which had so disturbed the even mind of Sir Peter; but she did not divine what the something was, and if mortified by a certain reserve, more distant than heretofore, which had characterised Kenelm's manner towards herself, the mortification was less sensibly felt than a tender sympathy for the sadness she had observed on his face, and yearned to soothe. His reserve had, however, made her own manner more reserved than of old, for which she was now rather chiding herself than reproaching him.

Lady Glenalvon put her arms round Cecilia's neck and kissed her, whispering, "That man has so disappointed me; he is so unworthy of the happiness I had once hoped for him!"

"Whom do you speak of?" murmured Cecilia, turning very pale.

"Kenelm Chillingly. It seems that he has conceived a fancy for some penniless girl whom he has met in his wanderings, has come here to get the consent of his parents to propose to her, has obtained their consent, and is gone to propose."

Cecilia remained silent for a moment with her eyes closed, then she said, "He is worthy of all happiness, and he would never make an unworthy choice. Heaven bless him—and—and——" She would have added, "his bride," but her lips refused to utter the word bride.

"Cousin Gordon is worth ten of him," cried Lady Glenalvon indignantly.

She had served Kenelm, but she had not forgiven him.

CHAPTER V.

KENELM slept in London that night, and, the next day, being singularly fine for an English summer, he resolved to go to Moleswich on foot. He had no need this time to encumber himself with a knapsack; he had left sufficient change of dress in his lodgings at Cromwell Lodge.

It was towards the evening when he found himself in one of the prettiest rural villages by which

“Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.”

It was not in the direct road from London to Moleswich, but it was a pleasanter way for a pedestrian. And when, quitting the long street of the sultry village, he came to the shelving margin of the river, he was glad to rest a while, enjoy the cool of the rippling waters, and listen to their placid murmurs amid the rushes in the bordering shallows. He had ample time before him. His rambles while at Cromwell Lodge had made him familiar with the district for miles round Moleswich, and he knew that a footpath through the fields at the right would lead him, in less than an hour, to the side of the tributary brook on which Cromwell Lodge was placed, opposite the wooden bridge which conducted to Grasmere and Moleswich.

To one who loves the romance of history, English history, the whole course of the Thames is full of charm. Ah! could I go back to the days in which younger generations than that of Kenelm Chillingly were unborn, when every wave of Rhine spoke of history and romance to me, what fairies should meet on thy banks, O thou our own Father Thames! Perhaps some day a German pilgrim may repay tenfold to thee the tribute rendered by the English kinsman to the Father Rhine.

Listening to the whispers of the reeds, Kenelm Chillingly felt the haunting influence of the legendary stream. Many a poetic incident or tradition in antique chronicle, many a votive rhyme in song, dear to forefathers whose very names

have become a poetry to us, thronged dimly and confusedly back to his memory, which had little cared to retain such graceful trinkets in the treasure-house of love. But everything that, from childhood upward, connects itself with romance—revives with yet fresher bloom in the memories of him who loves.

And to this man, through the first perilous season of youth, so abnormally safe from youth's most wonted peril,—to this would-be pupil of realism, this learned adept in the schools of a Welby or a Mivers,—to this man, Love came at last as with the fatal powers of the fabled Cytherea; and with that love all the realisms of life became ideals, all the stern lines of our commonplace destinies undulating into curves of beauty, all the trite sounds of our everyday life attuned into delicacies of song. How full of sanguine yet dreamy bliss was his heart,—and seemed his future,—in the gentle breeze and the softened glow of that summer eve! He should see Lily the next morn, and his lips were now free to say all that they had as yet suppressed.

Suddenly he was roused from the half-awake, half-asleep happiness that belongs to the moments in which we transport ourselves into Elysium, by the carol of a voice more loudly joyous than that of his own heart—

“Singing—singing,
Lustily singing,
Down the road, with his dogs before,
Came the Ritter of Nierestein.”

Kenelm turned his head so quickly that he frightened Max, who had for the last minute been standing behind him inquisitively with one paw raised, and sniffing, in some doubt whether he recognised an old acquaintance; but at Kenelm's quick movement the animal broke into a nervous bark, and ran back to his master.

The Minstrel, little heeding the figure reclined on the bank, would have passed on with his light tread and his cheery carol, but Kenelm rose to his feet, and holding out his hand, said, “I hope you don't share Max's alarm at meeting me again?”

"Ah, my young philosopher, is it indeed you?"

"If I am to be designated a philosopher it is certainly not I. And, honestly speaking, I am not the same. I, who spent that pleasant day with you among the fields round Luscombe two years ago——"

"Or who advised me at Tor Hadham to string my lyre to the praise of a beefsteak. I, too, am not quite the same, I, whose dog presented you with the begging-tray."

"Yet you still go through the world singing."

"Even that vagrant singing time is pretty well over. But I disturbed you from your repose. I would rather share it; you are probably not going my way, and as I am in no hurry, I should not like to lose the opportunity chance has so happily given me of renewing acquaintance with one who has often been present to my thoughts since we last met." Thus saying, the Minstrel stretched himself at ease on the bank, and Kenelm followed his example.

There certainly was a change in the owner of the dog with the begging-tray, a change in costume, in countenance, in that indescribable self-evidence which we call "manner." The costume was not that Bohemian attire in which Kenelm had first encountered the Wandering Minstrel, nor the studied, more graceful garb, which so well became his shapely form, during his visit to Luscombe. It was now neatly simple, the cool and quiet summer dress any English gentleman might adopt in a long rural walk. And as he uncovered his head to court the cooling breeze, there was a graver dignity in the man's handsome Rubens-like face, a line of more concentrated thought in the spacious forehead, a thread or two of grey shimmering here and there through the thick auburn curls of hair and beard. And in his manner, though still very frank, there was just perceptible a sort of self-assertion, not offensive, but manly; such as does not misbecome one of maturer years, and of some established position, addressing another man much younger than himself, who in all probability has achieved no position at all beyond that which the accident of birth might assign to him.

"Yes," said the Minstrel, with a half-suppressed sigh, "the

last year of my vagrant holidays has come to its close. I recollect that the first day we met by the roadside fountain, I advised you to do like me, seek amusement and adventure as a foot-traveller. Now, seeing you, evidently a gentleman by education and birth, still a foot-traveller, I feel as if I ought to say, 'You have had enough of such experience; vagabond life has its perils as well as charms; cease it, and settle down.'

"I think of doing so," replied Kenelm, laconically.

"In a profession?—army—law—medicine?"

"No."

"Ah, in marriage then. Right; give me your hand on that. So a petticoat indeed has at last found its charm for you in the actual world, as well as on the canvas of a picture?"

"I conclude," said Kenelm,—evading any direct notice of that playful taunt,—*"I conclude from your remark that it is in marriage you are about to settle down."*

"Ay, could I have done so before I should have been saved from many errors, and been many years nearer to the goal which dazzled my sight through the haze of my boyish dreams."

"What is that goal—the grave?"

"The grave! That which allows of no grave—Fame."

"I see—despite of what you just now said—you still mean to go through the world seeking a poet's fame."

"Alas! I resign that fancy," said the Minstrel, with another half-sigh. "It was not indeed wholly, but in great part the hope of the poet's fame that made me a truant in the way to that which destiny, and such few gifts as nature conceded to me, marked out for my proper and only goal. But what a strange, delusive Will-o'-the-Wisp the love of verse-making is! How rarely a man of good sense deceives himself as to other things for which he is fitted, in which he can succeed; but let him once drink into his being the charm of verse-making, how the glamour of the charm bewitches his understanding! how long it is before he can believe that the world will not take his word for it, when he cries out to sun, moon, and stars, 'I, too, am a poet.' And with what agonies, as if at the wrench of soul from life, he resigns himself at last to the conviction, that whether he or the world be

right, it comes to the same thing. Who can plead his cause before a court that will not give him a hearing?"

It was with an emotion so passionately strong, and so intensely painful, that the owner of the dog with the begging-tray thus spoke, that Kenelm felt, through sympathy, as if he himself were torn asunder by the wrench of life from soul. But then, Kenelm was a mortal so eccentric, that, if a single acute suffering endured by a fellow mortal could be brought before the evidence of his senses, I doubt whether he would not have suffered as much as that fellow-mortal. So that, though if there were a thing in the world which Kenelm Chillingly would care not to do, it was verse-making, his mind involuntarily hastened to the arguments by which he could best mitigate the pang of the verse-maker.

Quoth he—"According to my very scanty reading, you share the love of verse-making with men the most illustrious in careers which have achieved the goal of fame. It must, then, be a very noble love—Augustus, Pollio, Varius, Mæcenas—the greatest statesmen of their day; they were verse-makers. Cardinal Richelieu was a verse-maker; Walter Raleigh and Philip Sidney; Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Warren Hastings, Canning—even the grave William Pitt; all were verse-makers. Verse-making did not retard—no doubt the qualities essential to verse-making accelerated—their race to the goal of fame. What great painters have been verse-makers! Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Salvator Rosa"—and Heaven knows how many other great names Kenelm Chillingly might have proceeded to add to his list, if the Minstrel had not here interposed.

"What! all those mighty painters were verse-makers?"

"Verse-makers so good, especially Michael Angelo—the greatest painter of all—that they would have had the fame of poets, if, unfortunately for that goal of fame, their glory in the sister art of painting did not outshine it. But when you give to your gift of song the modest title of verse-making, permit me to observe that your gift is perfectly distinct from that of the verse-maker. Your gift, whatever it may be, could not exist without some sympathy with the non-verse-making human heart. No doubt in your foot-travels, you have acquired not only observant

intimacy with external nature in the shifting hues at each hour of a distant mountain, in the lengthening shadows which yon sunset casts on the waters at our feet, in the habits of the thrush dropped fearlessly close beside me, in that turf moistened by its neighbourhood to those dripping rushes, all of which I could describe no less accurately than you—as a Peter Bell might describe them no less accurately than a William Wordsworth. But in such songs of yours as you have permitted me to hear, you seem to have escaped out of that elementary accident of the poet's art, and to touch, no matter how slightly, on the only lasting interest which the universal heart of man can have in the song of the poet—viz., in the sound which the poet's individual sympathy draws forth from the latent chords in that universal heart. As for what you call 'the world,' what is it more than the fashion of the present day? How far the judgment of that is worth a poet's pain I can't pretend to say. But of one thing I am sure, that while I could as easily square the circle as compose a simple couplet addressed to the heart of a simple audience with sufficient felicity to decoy their praises into Max's begging-tray, I could spin out by the yard the sort of verse-making which characterises the fashion of the present day."

Much flattered, and not a little amused, the Wandering Minstrel turned his bright countenance, no longer dimmed by a cloud, towards that of his lazily-reclined consoler, and answered gaily—

"You say that you could spin out by the yard verses in the fashion of the present day. I wish you would give me a specimen of your skill in that handiwork."

"Very well; on one condition, that you will repay my trouble by a specimen of your own verses, not in the fashion of the present day,—something which I can construe. I defy you to construe mine."

"Agreed."

"Well, then, let us take it for granted that this is the Augustan age of English poetry, and that the English language is dead, like the Latin. Suppose I am writing for a prize medal, in English, as I wrote at college for a prize-medal, in Latin; of

course, I shall be successful in proportion as I introduce the verbal elegances peculiar to our Augustan age, and also catch the prevailing poetic characteristic of that classical epoch.

"Now I think that every observant critic will admit that the striking distinctions of the poetry most in the fashion of the present day, viz., of the Augustan age, are—first a selection of such verbal elegances as would have been most repulsive to the barbaric taste of the preceding century; and, secondly, a very lofty disdain of all prosaic condescensions to common sense, and an elaborate cultivation of that element of the sublime which Mr. Burke defines under the head of obscurity.

"These premises conceded, I will only ask you to choose the metre. Blank verse is very much in fashion just now"

"Pooh!—blank verse indeed—I am not going so to free your experiment from the difficulties of rhyme."

"It is all one to me," said Kenelm, yawning; "rhyme be it: heroic or lyrical?"

"Heroics are old-fashioned; but the Chaucer couplet, as brought to perfection by our modern poets, I think the best adapted to dainty leaves and uncrackable nuts. I accept the modern Chaucerian."

"The subject?"

"Oh, never trouble yourself about that. By whatever title your Augustan verse-maker labels his poem, his genius, like Pindar's, disdains to be cramped by the subject. Listen, and don't suffer Max to howl, if he can help it. Here goes."

And in an affected, but emphatic, sing-song, Kenelm began:—

"In Attica the gentle Pythias dwelt.
 Youthful he was, and passing rich: he felt
 As if nor youth nor riches could suffice
 For bliss. Dark-eyed Sophronia was a nice
 Girl: and one summer day, when Neptune drove
 His sea-car slowly, and the olive grove
 That skirts Ilissus, to thy shell, Harmonia,
 Rippled, he said 'I love thee' to Sophronia.
 Crocus and iris, when they heard him, wagg'd
 Their pretty heads in glee: the honey-bagg'd
 Bees became altars: and the forest dove
 Her plumage smooth'd. Such is the charm of love.
 Of this sweet story do ye long for more?
 Wait till I publish it in volumes four;

Which certain critics, my good friends, will cry
Up beyond Chaucer. Take their word for't. I
Say 'Trust them: but not read,—or you'll not buy.'"

"You have certainly kept your word," said the Minstrel, laughing; "and if this be the Augustan age, and the English were a dead language, you deserve to win the prize-medal."

"You flatter me," said Kenelm, modestly. "But if I, who never before strung two rhymes together, can improvise so readily in the style of the present day, why should not a practical rhymester like yourself dash off at a sitting a volume or so in the same style; disguising completely the verbal elegances borrowed, adding to the delicacies of the rhyme by the frequent introduction of a line that will not scan, and towering yet more into the sublime by becoming yet more unintelligible? Do that, and I promise you the most glowing panegyric in *The Londoner*, for I will write it myself."

"*The Londoner!*" exclaimed the Minstrel, with an angry flush on his cheek and brow, "my bitter, relentless enemy."

"I fear, then, you have as little studied the critical press of the Augustan as you have imbued your Muse with the classical spirit of its verse. For the art of writing a man must cultivate himself. The art of being reviewed consists in cultivating the acquaintance of reviewers. In the Augustan age criticism is cliquism. Belong to a clique and you are Horace or Tibullus. Belong to no clique and, of course, you are Bavius or Mævius. *The Londoner* is the enemy of no man—it holds all men in equal contempt. But as, in order to amuse, it must abuse, it compensates the praise it is compelled to bestow upon the members of its clique by heaping additional scorn upon all who are cliqueless. Hit him hard, he has no friends."

"Ah," said the Minstrel, "I believe that there is much truth in what you say. I never had a friend among the cliques. And Heaven knows with what pertinacity those from whom I, in utter ignorance of the rules which govern so-called organs of opinion, had hoped, in my time of struggle, for a little sympathy,—a kindly encouragement,—have combined to crush me down. They succeeded long. But at last I venture to hope that I am beating them. Happily, Nature endowed me with a sanguine,

joyous, elastic temperament. He who never despairs seldom completely fails."

This speech rather perplexed Kenelm, for had not the Minstrel declared that his singing days were over, that he had decided on the renunciation of verse-making? What other path to fame, from which the critics had not been able to exclude his steps, was he, then, now pursuing? he whom Kenelm had assumed to belong to some commercial money-making firm. No doubt some less difficult prose-track, probably a novel. Everybody writes novels nowadays, and as the public will read novels without being told to do so, and will not read poetry unless they are told that they ought, possibly novels are not quite so much at the mercy of cliques as are the poems of our Augustan age.

However, Kenelm did not think of seeking for further confidence on that score. His mind at that moment, not unnaturally, wandered from books and critics to love and wedlock.

"Our talk," said he, "has digressed into fretful courses—permit me to return to the starting-point. You are going to settle down into the peace of home. A peaceful home is like a good conscience. The rains without do not pierce its roof, the winds without do not shake its walls. If not an impertinent question, is it long since you have known your intended bride?"

"Yes, very long."

"And always loved her?"

"Always, from her infancy. Out of all womankind, she was designed to be my life's playmate, and my soul's purifier. I know not what might have become of me, if the thought of her had not walked beside me as my guardian angel. For, like many vagrants from the beaten high roads of the world, there is in my nature something of that lawlessness which belongs to high animal spirits, to the zest of adventure, and the warm blood that runs into song, chiefly because song is the voice of a joy. And no doubt, when I look back on the past years I must own that I have too often been led astray from the objects set before my reason, and cherished at my heart, by erring impulse or wanton fancy."

"Petticoat interest, I presume," interposed Kenelm, drily.

"I wish I could honestly answer 'No,'" said the Minstrel,

colouring high. "But from the worst, from all that would have permanently blasted the career to which I intrust my fortunes, all that would have rendered me unworthy of the pure love that now, I trust, awaits and crowns my dreams of happiness, I have been saved by the haunting smile in a sinless infantine face. Only once was I in great peril—that hour of peril I recall with a shudder. It was at Luscombe."

"At Luscombe!"

"In the temptation of a terrible crime I thought I heard a voice say—'Mischief! Remember the little child.' In that supervision which is so readily accepted as a divine warning, when the imagination is morbidly excited, and when the conscience, though lulled asleep for a moment, is still asleep so lightly that the sigh of a breeze, the fall of a leaf, can awake it with a start of terror, I took the voice for that of my guardian angel. Thinking it over later, and coupling the voice with the moral of those weird lines you repeated to me so appositely the next day, I conclude that I am not mistaken when I say it was from your lips that the voice which preserved me came."

"I confess the impertinence—you pardon it?"

The Minstrel seized Kenelm's hand and pressed it earnestly.

"Pardon it! Oh, could you but guess what cause I have to be grateful, everlastingly grateful! That sudden cry, the remorse and horror of my own self that it struck into me—deepened by those rugged lines which the next day made me shrink in dismay from 'the face of my darling sin'! Then came the turning-point of my life. From that day, the lawless vagabond within me was killed. I mean not, indeed, the love of nature and of song which had first allured the vagabond, but the hatred of steadfast habits and of serious work—that was killed. I no longer trifled with my calling, I took to it as a serious duty. And when I saw her, whom fate has reserved and reared for my bride, her face was no longer in my eyes that of the playful child; the soul of the woman was dawning into it. It is but two years since that day, to me so eventful. Yet my fortunes are now secured. And if fame be not established, I am at last in a position which warrants my saying to her I love, 'The time has come when, without fear for thy future, I can ask thee to be mine.'"

The man spoke with so fervent a passion that Kenelm silently left him to recover his wonted self-possession,—not unwilling to be silent—not unwilling, in the softness of the hour, passing from roseate sunset into starry twilight, to murmur to himself, “And the time, too, has come for me!”

After a few moments the Minstrel resumed lightly and cheerily—

“Sir, your turn—pray have you long known—judging by our former conversation you cannot have long loved—the lady whom you have wooed and won?”

As Kenelm had neither as yet wooed nor won the lady in question, and did not deem it necessary to enter into any details on the subject of love particular to himself, he replied by a general observation—

“It seems to me that the coming of love is like the coming of spring—the date is not to be reckoned by the calendar. It may be slow and gradual; it may be quick and sudden. But in the morning, when we wake and recognise a change in the world without, verdure on the trees, blossoms on the sward, warmth in the sunshine, music in the air, then we say Spring has come!”

“I like your illustration. And if it be an idle question to ask a lover how long he has known the beloved one, so it is almost as idle to ask if she be not beautiful. He cannot but see in her face the beauty she has given to the world without.”

“True; and that thought is poetic enough to make me remind you that I favoured you with the maiden specimen of my verse-making on condition that you repaid me by a specimen of your own practical skill in the art. And I claim the right to suggest the theme. Let it be——”

“Of a beefsteak?”

“Tush, you have worn out that tasteless joke at my expense. The theme must be of love, and if you could improvise a stanza or two expressive of the idea you just uttered I shall listen with yet more pleased attention.”

“Alas! I am no *improvisatore*. Yet I will avenge myself on your former neglect of my craft by chanting to you a trifle

somewhat in unison with the thought you ask me to versify, but which you would not stay to hear at Tor Hadham (though you did drop a shilling into Max's tray)—it was one of the songs I sang that evening, and it was not ill-received by my humble audience.

THE BEAUTY OF THE MISTRESS IS IN THE LOVER'S EYE.

“Is she not pretty, my Mabel May?
Nobody ever yet called her so.
Are not her lineaments faultless, say?
If I must answer you plainly—No.

“Joy to believe that the maid I love
None but myself as she is can see;
Joy that she steals from her Heaven above,
And is only revealed on this earth to me!”

As soon as he had finished this very artless ditty, the Minstrel rose and said—

“Now I must bid you good-bye. My way lies through those meadows, and yours, no doubt, along the high road.”

“Not so. Permit me to accompany you. I have a lodging not far from hence, to which the path through the fields is the shortest way.”

The Minstrel turned a somewhat surprised and somewhat inquisitive look towards Kenelm. But feeling, perhaps, that having withheld from his fellow-traveller all confidence as to his own name and attributes, he had no right to ask any confidence from that gentleman not voluntarily made to him, he courteously said “that he wished the way were longer, since it would be so pleasantly halved,” and strode forth at a brisk pace.

The twilight was now closing into the brightness of a starry summer night, and the solitude of the fields was unbroken. Both these men, walking side by side, felt supremely happy. But happiness is like wine; its effect differing with the differing temperaments on which it acts. In this case garrulous and somewhat vaunting with the one man, warm-coloured, sensuous, impressionable to the influences of external nature, as an Æolian harp to the rise or fall of a passing wind; and, with the other man, taciturn and somewhat modestly expressed, saturnine,

meditative, not indeed dull to the influences of external nature, but deeming them of no value, save where they passed out of the domain of the sensuous into that of the intellectual, and the soul of man dictated to the soulless nature its own questions and its own replies.

The Minstrel took the talk on himself, and the talk charmed his listener. It became so really eloquent in the tones of its utterance, in the frank play of its delivery, that I could no more adequately describe it than a reporter, however faithful to every word a true orator may say, can describe that which, apart from all words, belongs to the presence of the orator himself.

Not, then, venturing to report the language of this singular itinerant, I content myself with saying that the substance of it was of the nature on which it is said most men can be eloquent: it was personal to himself. He spoke of aspirations towards the achievement of a name, dating back to the dawn of memory; of early obstacles in lowly birth, stunted fortunes; of a sudden opening to his ambition while yet in boyhood, through the generous favour of a rich man, who said, "The child has genius, I will give it the discipline of culture, one day it shall repay to the world what it owes to me;" of studies passionately begun, earnestly pursued, and mournfully suspended in early youth. He did not say how or wherefore: he rushed on to dwell upon the struggles for a livelihood for himself and those dependent on him; how in such struggles he was compelled to divert toil and energy from the systematic pursuit of the object he had once set before him; the necessities for money were too urgent to be postponed to the visions of fame. "But even," he exclaimed, passionately, "even in such hasty and crude manifestations of what is within me, as circumstances limited my powers, I know that I ought to have found from those who profess to be authoritative judges the encouragement of praise. How much better, then, I should have done if I had found it! How a little praise warms out of a man the good that is in him, and the sneer of a contempt which he feels to be unjust chills the ardour to excel! However, I forced my way, so far as was

then most essential to me, the sufficing breadmaker for those I loved; and in my holidays of song and ramble I found a delight that atoned for all the rest. But still the desire of fame, once conceived in childhood, once nourished through youth, never dies but in our grave. Foot and hoof may tread it down, bud, leaf, stalk; its root is too deep below the surface for them to reach, and year after year stalk and leaf and bud re-emerge. Love may depart from our mortal life; we console ourselves—the beloved will be re-united to us in the life to come. But if he who sets his heart on fame loses it in this life, what can console him?"

"Did you not say a little while ago that fame allowed of no grave?"

"True; but if we do not achieve it before we ourselves are in the grave, what comfort can it give to us? Love ascends to Heaven, to which we hope ourselves to ascend; but fame remains on the earth, which we shall never again revisit. And it is because fame is earth-born that the desire for it is the most lasting, the regret for the want of it the most bitter, to the child of earth. But I shall achieve it now; it is already in my grasp."

By this time the travellers had arrived at the brook, facing the wooden bridge beside Cromwell Lodge.

Here the Minstrel halted; and Kenelm, with a certain tremble in his voice, said, "Is it not time that we should make ourselves known to each other by name? I have no longer any cause to conceal mine, indeed I never had any cause stronger than whim—Kenelm Chillingly, the only son of Sir Peter, of Exmundham, —shire."

"I wish your father joy of so clever a son," said the Minstrel with his wonted urbanity. "You already know enough of me to be aware that I am of much humbler birth and station than you; but if you chance to have visited the exhibition of the Royal Academy this year—ah! I understand that start—you might have recognised a picture of which you have seen the rudimentary sketch, 'The girl with the flower-ball,' one of three pictures very severely handled by *The Londoner*, but, in spite of that potent enemy, insuring fortune and promising fame to

the Wandering Minstrel, whose name, if the sight of the pictures had induced you to inquire into that, you would have found to be Walter Melville. Next January I hope, thanks to that picture, to add, 'Associate of the Royal Academy.' The public will not let them keep me out of it, in spite of *The Londoner*. You are probably an expected guest at one of the more imposing villas from which we see the distant lights. I am going to a very humble cottage, in which henceforth I hope to find my established home. I am there now only for a few days, but pray let me welcome you there before I leave. The cottage is called Grasmere."

CHAPTER VI.

THE Minstrel gave a cordial parting shake of the hand to the fellow-traveller whom he had advised to settle down, not noticing how very cold had become the hand in his own genial grasp. Lightly he passed over the wooden bridge, preceded by Max, and merrily, when he had gained the other side of the bridge, came upon Kenelm's ear, through the hush of the luminous night, the verse of the uncompleted love-song—

"Singing—singing,
Lustily singing,
Down the road, with his dogs before,
Came the Ritter of Nierestein."

Love-song, uncompleted—why uncompleted? It was not given to Kenelm to divine the why. It was a love-song versifying one of the prettiest fairy tales in the world, which was a great favourite with Lily, and which Lion had promised Lily to versify, but only to complete it in her presence, and to her perfect satisfaction.

CHAPTER VII.

IF I could not venture to place upon paper the exact words of an eloquent coveter of fame, the earth-born, still less can I dare to place upon paper all that passed through the voiceless heart of a coveter of love, the heaven-born.

From the hour in which Kenelm Chillingly had parted from Walter Melville until somewhere between sunrise and noon the next day, the summer joyousness of that external nature which does now and then, though, for the most part, deceitfully, address to the soul of man questions and answers all her soulless own, laughed away the gloom of his misgivings.

No doubt this Walter Melville was the beloved guardian of Lily; no doubt it was Lily whom he designated as reserved and reared to become his bride. But on that question Lily herself had the sovereign voice. It remained yet to be seen whether Kenelm had deceived himself in the belief that had made the world so beautiful to him since the hour of their last parting. At all events it was due to her, due even to his rival, to assert his own claim to her choice. And the more he recalled all that Lily had ever said to him of her-guardian, so openly, so frankly, proclaiming affection, admiration, gratitude, the more convincingly his reasonings allayed his fears, whispering, "So might a child speak of a parent: not so does the maiden speak of the man she loves; she can scarcely trust herself to praise."

In fine, it was not in despondent mood, nor with dejected looks, that, a little before noon, Kenelm crossed the bridge and re-entered the enchanted land of Grasmere. In answer to his inquiries, the servant who opened the door said that neither Mr. Melville nor Miss Mordaunt were at home; they had but just gone out together for a walk. He was about to turn back, when Mrs. Cameron came into the hall, and, rather by gesture than words, invited him to enter. Kenelm followed her into the drawing-room, taking his seat beside her. He was about to speak, when she interrupted him in a tone of voice so unlike its usual languor, so keen, so sharp, that it sounded like a cry of distress.

"I was just about to come to you. Happily, however, you

find me alone, and what may pass between us will be soon over. But first tell me—you have seen your parents; you have asked their consent to wed a girl such as I described; tell me, oh tell me that that consent is refused!”

“On the contrary, I am here with their full permission to ask the hand of your niece.”

Mrs. Cameron sank back in her chair, rocking herself to and fro in the posture of a person in great pain.

“I feared that. Walter said he had met you last evening; that you, like himself, entertained the thought of marriage. You, of course when you learnt his name, must have known with whom his thought was connected. Happily, he could not divine what was the choice to which your youthful fancy had been so blindly led.”

“My dear Mrs. Cameron,” said Kenelm, very mildly, but very firmly, “you were aware of the purpose for which I left Moleswich a few days ago, and it seems to me that you might have forestalled my intention, the intention which brings me thus early to your house. I come to say to Miss Mordaunt’s guardian, ‘I ask the hand of your ward. If you also woo her, I have a very noble rival. With both of us no consideration for our own happiness can be comparable to the duty of consulting hers. Let her choose between the two.’”

“Impossible!” exclaimed Mrs. Cameron; “impossible. You know not what you say; know not, guess not, how sacred are the claims of Walter Melville to all that the orphan whom he has protected from her very birth can give him in return. She has no right to a preference for another; her heart is too grateful to admit of one. If the choice were given to her between him and you, it is he whom she would choose. Solemnly I assure you of this. Do not, then, subject her to the pain of such a choice. Suppose, if you will, that you had attracted her fancy, and that now you proclaimed your love and urged your suit, she would not, must not, the less reject your hand, but you might cloud her happiness in accepting Melville’s. Be generous. Conquer your own fancy; it can be but a passing one. Speak not to her, nor to Mr. Melville, of a wish which can never be realised. Go hence, silently, and at once.”

The words and the manner of the pale imploring woman struck a vague awe into the heart of her listener. But he did not the less resolutely answer, "I cannot obey you. It seems to me that my honour commands me to prove to your niece that, if I mistook the nature of her feelings towards me, I did not, by word or look, lead her to believe mine towards herself were less in earnest than they are; and it seems scarcely less honourable towards my worthy rival to endanger his own future happiness, should he discover later that his bride would have been happier with another. Why be so mysteriously apprehensive? If, as you say, with such apparent conviction, there is no doubt of your niece's preference for another, at a word from her own lips I depart, and you will see me no more. But that word must be said by her; and if you will not permit me to ask for it in your own house, I will take my chance of finding her now, on her walk with Mr. Melville; and, could he deny me the right to speak to her alone, that which I would say can be said in his presence. Ah! madam, have you no mercy for the heart that you so needlessly torture? If I must bear the worst, let me learn it, and at once."

"Learn it, then, from my lips," said Mrs. Cameron, speaking with voice unnaturally calm, and features rigidly set into stern composure. "And I place the secret you wring from me under the seal of that honour, which you so vauntingly make your excuse for imperilling the peace of the home I ought never to have suffered you to enter. An honest couple, of humble station and narrow means, had an only son, who evinced in early childhood talents so remarkable that they attracted the notice of the father's employer, a rich man of very benevolent heart and very cultivated taste. He sent the child, at his expense, to a first-rate commercial school, meaning to provide for him later in his own firm. The rich man was the head partner of an eminent bank; but very infirm health, and tastes much estranged from business, had induced him to retire from all active share in the firm, the management of which was confined to a son whom he idolised. But the talents of the *protégé* he had sent to school, there took so passionate a direction towards art, and estranged from trade; and his designs in drawing, when shown to con-

noisseurs, were deemed so promising of future excellence; that the patron changed his original intention, entered him as a pupil in the studio of a distinguished French painter, and afterwards bade him perfect his taste by the study of Italian and Flemish masterpieces.

"He was still abroad, when—" here Mrs. Cameron stopped, with visible effort, suppressed a sob, and went on, whisperingly, through teeth clenched together—"when a thunderbolt fell on the house of the patron, shattering his fortunes, blasting his name. The son, unknown to the father, had been decoyed into speculations, which proved unfortunate; the loss might have been easily retrieved in the first instance, unhappily he took the wrong course to retrieve it, and launched into new hazards. I must be brief. One day the world was startled by the news that a firm, famed for its supposed wealth and solidity, was bankrupt. Dishonesty was alleged, was proved, not against the father,—he went forth from the trial, censured indeed for neglect, not condemned for fraud, but a penniless pauper. The—son—the son—the idolised son—was removed from the prisoner's dock, a convicted felon, sentenced to penal servitude. Escaped that sentence by—by—you guess—you guess. How could he escape except through death?—death by his own guilty deed."

Almost as much overpowered by emotion as Mrs. Cameron herself, Kenelm covered his bended face with one hand, stretching out the other blindly to clasp her own, but she would not take it.

A dreary foreboding. Again before his eyes rose the old grey tower—again in his ears thrilled the tragic tale of the Fletwodes. What was yet left untold held the young man in spellbound silence. Mrs. Cameron resumed—

"I said the father was a penniless pauper; he died lingeringly bedridden. But one faithful friend did not desert that bed; the youth to whose genius his wealth had ministered. He had come from abroad with some modest savings from the sale of copies or sketches made in Florence. These savings kept a roof over the heads of the old man and the two helpless, broken-hearted women—paupers like himself,—his own daughter and his son's widow. When the savings were gone, the young man

stooped from his destined calling, found employment somehow, no matter how alien to his tastes, and these three whom his toil supported never wanted a home or food. Well, a few weeks after her husband's terrible death, his young widow (they had not been a year married) gave birth to a child—a girl. She did not survive the exhaustion of her confinement many days. The shock of her death snapped the feeble thread of the poor father's life. Both were borne to the grave on the same day. Before they died, both made the same prayer to their sole two mourners, the felon's sister, the old man's young benefactor. The prayer was this, that the new-born infant should be reared, however humbly, in ignorance of her birth, of a father's guilt and shame. She was not to pass a suppliant for charity to rich and high-born kinsfolk, who had vouchsafed no word even of pity to the felon's guiltless father and as guiltless wife. That promise has been kept till now. I am that daughter. The name I bear, and the name which I gave to my niece, are not ours, save as we may indirectly claim them through alliances centuries ago. I have never married. I was to have been a bride, bringing to the representative of no ignoble house what was to have been a princely dower; the wedding day was fixed, when the bolt fell. I have never again seen my betrothed. He went abroad and died there. I think he loved me, he knew I loved him. Who can blame him for deserting me? Who could marry the felon's sister? Who would marry the felon's child? Who, but one? The man who knows her secret, and will guard it; the man who, caring little for other education, has helped to instil into her spotless childhood so steadfast a love of truth, so exquisite a pride of honour, that did she know such ignominy rested on her birth, she would pine herself away."

"Is there only one man on earth," cried Kenelm, suddenly, rearing his face—till then concealed and downcast—and with a loftiness of pride on its aspect, new to its wonted mildness,—“is there only one man who would deem the virgin, at whose feet he desires to kneel and say, ‘Deign to be the queen of my life,’ not far too noble in herself to be debased by the sins of others before she was even born; is there only one man who does not think that the love of truth and the pride of honour are most

royal attributes of woman or of man, no matter whether the fathers of the woman or the man were pirates as lawless as the fathers of Norman kings, or liars as unscrupulous, where their own interests were concerned, as have been the crowned representatives of lines as deservedly famous as Cæsars and Bourbons, Tudors and Stuarts? Nobility, like genius, is inborn. One man alone guard *her* secret!—guard a secret that if made known could trouble a heart that recoils from shame! Ah, madam, we Chillinglys are a very obscure undistinguished race, but for more than a thousand years we have been English gentlemen. Guard her secret rather than risk the chance of discovery that could give her a pang? I would pass my whole life by her side in Kamtchatka, and even there I would not snatch a glimpse of the secret itself with mine own eyes, it should be so closely muffled and wrapped round by the folds of reverence and worship.”

This burst of passion seemed to Mrs. Cameron the senseless declamation of an inexperienced, hot-headed young man, and putting it aside, much as a great lawyer dismisses as balderdash the florid rhetoric of some junior counsel, rhetoric in which the great lawyer had once indulged; or as a woman for whom romance is over dismisses as idle verbiage some romantic sentiment that befools her young daughter. Mrs. Cameron simply replied, “All this is hollow talk, Mr. Chillingly; let us come to the point. After all I have said, do you mean to persist in your suit to my niece?”

“I persist.”

“What!” she cried, this time indignantly, and with generous indignation; “what, even were it possible that you could win your parents’ consent to marry the child of a man condemned to penal servitude, or, consistently with the duties a son owes to parents, conceal that fact from them, could you, born to a station on which every gossip will ask, ‘Who and what is the name of the future Lady Chillingly?’ believe that the who and the what will never be discovered! Have you, a mere stranger, unknown to us a few weeks ago, a right to say to Walter Melville, ‘Resign to me that which is your sole reward for the sublime sacrifices, for the loyal devotion, for the watchful tenderness of patient years?’”

"Surely, madam," cried Kenelm, more startled, more shaken in soul by this appeal, than by the previous revelations—"surely, when we last parted, when I confided to you my love for your niece, when you consented to my proposal to return home, and obtain my father's approval of my suit,—surely then was the time to say, 'No; a suitor with claims paramount and irresistible has come before you.'"

"I did not then know, Heaven is my witness, I did not then even suspect, that Walter Melville ever dreamed of seeking a wife in the child who had grown up under his eyes. You must own, indeed, how much I discouraged your suit; I could not discourage it more without revealing the secret of her birth, only to be revealed as an extreme necessity. But my persuasion was, that your father would not consent to your alliance with one so far beneath the expectations he was entitled to form, and the refusal of that consent would terminate all further acquaintance between you and Lily, leaving her secret undisclosed. It was not till you had left, only indeed two days ago, that I received a letter from Walter Melville, a letter which told me what I had never before conjectured. Here is the letter, read it, and then say if you have the heart to force yourself into rivalry, with—with——" She broke off, choked by her exertion, thrust the letter into his hands, and with keen, eager, hungry stare watched his countenance while he read.

"—— STREET, BLOOMSBURY.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Joy and triumph! My picture is completed, the picture on which, for so many months, I have worked night and day in this den of a studio, without a glimpse of the green fields, concealing my address from every one, even from you, lest I might be tempted to suspend my labours. The picture is completed—it is sold; guess the price! Fifteen hundred guineas, and to a dealer—a dealer! Think of that! It is to be carried about the country exhibited by itself. You remember those three little landscapes of mine which two years ago I would gladly have sold for ten pounds, only neither Lily nor you would let me. My good friend and earliest patron, the German merchant at Luscombe, who called on me yesterday

offered to cover them with guineas thrice piled over the canvas. Imagine how happy I felt when I forced him to accept them as a present. What a leap in a man's life it is when he can afford to say, 'I give!' Now then, at last, at last I am in a position which justifies the utterance of the hope which has for eighteen years been my solace, my support; been the sunbeam that ever shone through the gloom, when my fate was at the darkest; been the melody that buoyed me aloft as in the song of the skylark, when in the voices of men I heard but the laugh of scorn. Do you remember the night on which Lily's mother besought us to bring up her child in ignorance of her parentage, not even to communicate to unkind and disdainful relatives that such a child was born? Do you remember how plaintively, and yet how proudly, she, so nobly born, so luxuriously nurtured, clasping my hand when I ventured to remonstrate, and say that her own family could **not** condemn her child because of the father's guilt,—she, the proudest woman I ever knew, she whose smile I can at rare moments detect in Lily, raised her head from her pillow, and gasped forth—

“‘I am dying—the last words of the dying are commands. I command you to see that my child's lot is not that of a felon's daughter transported to the hearth of nobles. To be happy, her lot must be humble—no roof too humble to shelter, no husband too humble to wed, the felon's daughter.’

“From that hour I formed a resolve that I would keep hand and heart free, that when the grandchild of my princely benefactor grew up into womanhood I might say to her, ‘I am humbly born, but thy mother would have given thee to me.’ The new-born, consigned to our charge, has now ripened into woman, and I have now so assured my fortune that it is no longer poverty and struggle that I should ask her to share. I am conscious that, were her fate not so exceptional, this hope of mine would be a vain presumption—conscious that I am but the creature of her grandsire's bounty, and that from it springs all I ever can be—conscious of the disparity in years—conscious of many a past error and present fault. But, as fate so ordains, such considerations are trivial; I am her rightful choice. What other choice, compatible with these necessities which weigh, dear

and honoured friend, immeasurably more on your sense of honour than they do upon mine? and yet mine is not dull. Granting, then, that you, her nearest and most responsible relative, do not condemn me for presumption, all else seems to me clear. Lily's childlike affection for me is too deep and too fond not to warm into a wife's love. Happily, too, she has not been reared in the stereotyped boarding-school shallownesses of knowledge and vulgarities of gentility; but educated, like myself, by the free influences of nature, longing for no halls and palaces save those that we build as we list, in fairyland; educated to comprehend and share the fancies, which are more than booklore to the worshipper of art and song. In a day or two, perhaps the day after you receive this, I shall be able to escape from London, and most-likely shall come on foot as usual. How I long to see once more the woodbine on the hedgerows, the green blades of the cornfields, the sunny lapse of the river, and dearer still the tiny falls of our own little noisy rill! Meanwhile I entreat you, dearest, gentlest, most honoured of such few friends as my life has hitherto won to itself, to consider well the direct purport of this letter. If you, born in a grade so much higher than mine, feel that it is unwarrantable insolence in me to aspire to the hand of my patron's grandchild, say so plainly; and I remain not less grateful for your friendship, than I was to your goodness when dining for the first time at your father's palace. Shy and sensitive and young, I felt that his grand guests wondered why I was invited to the same board as themselves. You, then courted, admired, you had sympathetic compassion on the raw, sullen boy; left those, who then seemed to me like the gods and goddesses of a heathen Pantheon, to come and sit beside your father's *protégé*, and cheeringly whisper to him such words as make a low-born ambitious lad go home light-hearted, saying to himself, 'Some day or other.' And what it is to an ambitious lad, fancying himself lifted by the gods and goddesses of a Pantheon, to go home light-hearted muttering to himself, 'Some day or other,' I doubt if even you can divine.

"But should you be as kind to the presumptuous man as you were to the bashful boy, and say, 'Realised be the dream, fulfilled be the object of your life! take from me as her next of kin, the

last descendant of your benefactor,' then I venture to address to you this request. You are in the place of mother to your sister's child, act for her as a keeper now, to prepare her mind and heart for the coming change in the relations between her and me. When I last saw her, six months ago, she was still so playfully infantine that it half seems to me I should be sinning against the reverence due to a child, if I said too abruptly, 'You are woman, and I love you not as child but as woman.' And yet, time is not allowed to me for long, cautious, and gradual slide from the relationship of friend into that of lover. I now understand what the great master of my art once said to me, 'A career is a destiny.' By one of those merchant princes who now at Manchester, as they did once at Genoa or Venice, reign alike over those two civilisers of the world which to dull eyes seem antagonistic, Art and Commerce, an offer is made to me for a picture on a subject which strikes his fancy; an offer so magnificently liberal that his commerce must command my art; and the nature of the subject compels me to seek the banks of the Rhine as soon as may be. I must have all the hues of the foliage in the meridian glories of summer. I can but stay at Grasmere a very few days; but before I leave I must know this, am I going to work for Lily or am I not? On the answer to that question depends all. If not to work for her, there would be no glory in the summer, no triumph in art to me: I refuse the offer. If she says, 'Yes; it is for me you work,' then she becomes my destiny. She assures my career. Here I speak as an artist: nobody who is not an artist can guess how sovereign over even his moral being, at a certain critical epoch in his career of artist or his life of man, is the success or the failure of a single work. But I go on to speak as man. My love for Lily is such for the last six months, that though if she rejected me I should still serve art, still yearn for fame, it would be as an old man might do either. The youth of my life would be gone.

"As man I say, all my thoughts, all my dreams of happiness, distinct from Art and fame, are summed up in the one question — 'Is Lily to be my wife or not?'

"Yours affectionately,

"W. M."

Kenelm returned the letter without a word.

Enraged by his silence, Mrs. Cameron exclaimed, "Now, sir, what say you? You have scarcely known Lily five weeks. What is the feverish fancy of five weeks' growth to the lifelong devotion of a man like this? Do you now dare to say, 'I persist'?"

Kenelm waved his hand very quietly, as if to dismiss all conception of taunt and insult, and said with his soft melancholy eyes fixed upon the working features of Lily's aunt, "This man is more worthy of her than I. He prays you, in his letter, to prepare your niece for that change of relationship which he dreads too abruptly to break to her himself. Have you done so?"

"I have; the night I got the letter."

"And—you hesitate; speak truthfully, I implore. And she——"

"She," answered Mrs. Cameron, feeling herself involuntarily compelled to obey the voice of that prayer—"she seemed stunned at first, muttering, 'This is a dream—it cannot be true—cannot! I Lion's wife—I—I! I, his destiny! In me his happiness!' And then she laughed her pretty child's laugh, and put her arms round my neck, and said, 'You are jesting, aunty. He could not write thus!' So I put that part of his letter under her eyes; and when she had convinced herself, her face became very grave, more like a woman's face than I ever saw it; and after a pause she cried out passionately, 'Can you think me—can I think myself—so bad, so ungrateful, as to doubt what I should answer, if Lion asked me whether I would willingly say or do anything that made him unhappy? If there be such a doubt in my heart, I would tear it out by the roots, heart and all!' Oh! Mr. Chillingly. There would be no happiness for her with another, knowing that she had blighted the life of him to whom she owes so much, though she never will learn how much more she owes." Kenelm not replying to this remark, Mrs. Cameron resumed—"I will be perfectly frank with you, Mr. Chillingly. I was not quite satisfied with Lily's manner and looks the next morning, that is, yesterday. I did fear there might be some struggle in her mind in which there entered

a thought of yourself. And when Walter, on his arrival here in the evening, spoke of you as one he had met before in his rural excursions, but whose name he only learned on parting at the bridge by Cromwell Lodge, I saw that Lily turned pale, and shortly afterwards went to her own room for the night. Fearing that any interview with you, though it would not alter her resolve, might lessen her happiness on the only choice she can and ought to adopt, I resolved to visit you this morning, and make that appeal to your reason and your heart which I have done now—not, I am sure, in vain. Hush! I hear his voice!”

Melville entered the room, Lily leaning on his arm. The artist's comely face was radiant with ineffable joyousness. Leaving Lily, he reached Kenelm's side as with a single bound, shook him heartily by the hand, and saying—"I find that you have already been a welcomed visitor in this house. Long may you be so, so say I, so (I answer for her) says my fair betrothed, to whom I need not present you."

Lily advanced, and held out her hand very timidly. Kenelm touched rather than clasped it. His own strong hand trembled like a leaf. He ventured but one glance at her face. All the bloom had died out of it, but the expression seemed to him wondrously, cruelly tranquil.

"Your betrothed—your future bride!" he said to the artist, with a mastery over his emotion rendered less difficult by the single glance at that tranquil face. "I wish you joy. All happiness to you, Miss Mordaunt. You have made a noble choice."

He looked round for his hat; it lay at his feet, but he did not see it; his eyes wandering away with uncertain vision, like those of a sleep-walker.

Mrs. Cameron picked up the hat and gave it to him.

"Thank you," he said meekly; then with a smile half sweet, half bitter, "I have so much to thank you for, Mrs. Cameron."

"But you are not going already—just as I enter too. Hold! Mrs. Cameron tells me you are lodging with my old friend Jones. Come and stop a couple of days with us, we can find you a room; the room over your butterfly cage, eh, Fairy?"

"Thank you, too. Thank you all. No; I must be in London by the first train."

Speaking thus, he had found his way to the door, bowed with the quiet grace that characterised all his movements, and was gone.

"Pardon his abruptness, Lily; he too loves; he too is impatient to find a betrothed," said the artist gaily; "but now he knows my dearest secret, I think I have a right to know his; and I will try."

He had scarcely uttered the words before he too had quitted the room and overtaken Kenelm just at the threshold.

"If you are going back to Cromwell Lodge—to pack up, I suppose—let me walk with you as far as the bridge."

Kenelm inclined his head assentingly and tacitly as they passed through the garden-gate, winding backward through the lane which skirted the garden pales; when, at the very spot in which the day after their first and only quarrel Lily's face had been seen brightening through the evergreen, that day on which the old woman, quitting her, said, "God bless you!" and on which the vicar, walking with Kenelm, spoke of her fairy charms; well, just in that spot Lily's face appeared again, not this time *brightening* through the evergreens, unless the palest gleam of the palest moon can be said to brighten. Kenelm saw, started, halted. His companion, then in the rush of a gladsome talk, of which Kenelm had not heard a word, neither saw nor halted; he walked on mechanically, gladsome, and talking.

Lily stretched forth her hand through the evergreens. Kenelm took it reverentially. This time it was not his hand that trembled.

"Good-bye," she said in a whisper, "good-bye for ever in this world. You understand—you do understand me. Say that you do."

"I understand. Noble child—noble choice! God bless you. God comfort me!" murmured Kenelm. Their eyes met. Oh, the sadness; and, alas! oh the love in the eyes of both!

Kenelm passed on.

All said in an instant. How many Alls are said in an

instant ! Melville was in the midst of some glowing sentence, begun when Kenelm dropped from his side, and the end of the sentence was this :

"Words cannot say how fair seems life ; how easy seems conquest of fame, dating from this day—this day"—and in his turn he halted, looked round on the sunlit landscape, and breathed deep, as if to drink into his soul all of the earth's joy and beauty which his gaze could compass, and the arch of the horizon bound.

"They who knew her even the best," resumed the artist, striding on, "even her aunt, never could guess how serious and earnest, under all her infantine prettiness of fancy, is that girl's real nature. We were walking along the brook side, when I began to tell how solitary the world would be to me if I could not win her to my side ; while I spoke she had turned aside from the path we had taken, and it was not till we were under the shadow of the church in which we shall be married that she uttered the word that gives to every cloud in my fate the silver lining ; implying thus how solemnly connected in her mind was the thought of love with the sanctity of religion."

Kenelm shuddered—the church—the burial-ground—the old Gothic tomb—the flowers round the infant's grave !

"But I am talking a great deal too much about myself," resumed the artist. "Lovers are the most consummate of all egotists, and the most garrulous of all gossips. You have wished me joy on my destined nuptials, when shall I wish you joy on yours ? Since we have begun to confide in each other, you are in my debt as to a confidence."

They had now gained the bridge. Kenelm turned round abruptly, "Good day ; let us part here. I have nothing to confide to you that might not seem to your ears a mockery when I wish you joy." So saying, so obeying in spite of himself the anguish of his heart, Kenelm wrung his companion's hand with the force of an uncontrollable agony, and speeded over the bridge before Melville recovered his surprise.

The artist would have small claim to the essential attribute of genius—viz., the intuitive sympathy of passion with passion—if that secret of Kenelm's which he had so lightly said "he

had acquired the right to learn," was not revealed to him as by an electric flash. "Poor fellow!" he said to himself pityingly; "how natural that he should fall in love with Fairy! but happily he is so young, and such a philosopher, that it is But one of those trials through which, at least ten times a-year, I have gone with wounds that leave not a scar."

Thus soliloquising, the warm-blooded worshipper of Nature returned homeward, too blest in the triumph of his own love to feel more than a kindly compassion for the wounded heart, consigned with no doubt of the healing result to the fickleness of youth and the consolations of philosophy. Not for a moment did the happier rival suspect that Kenelm's love was returned; that an atom in the heart of the girl who had promised to be his bride could take its light or shadow from any love but his own. Yet, more from delicacy of respect to the rival so suddenly self-betrayed than from any more prudential motive, he did not speak even to Mrs. Cameron of Kenelm's secret and sorrow; and certainly neither she nor Lily was disposed to ask any question that concerned the departed visitor.

In fact the name of Kenelm Chillingly was scarcely, if at all, mentioned in that household during the few days which elapsed before Walter Melville quitted Grasmere for the banks of the Rhine, not to return till the autumn, when his marriage with Lily was to take place. During those days Lily was calm and seemingly cheerful—her manner towards her betrothed, if more subdued, not less affectionate than of old. Mrs. Cameron congratulated herself on having so successfully got rid of Kenelm Chillingly.

CHAPTER VIII.

So, then, but for that officious warning, uttered under the balcony at Luscombe, Kenelm Chillingly might never have had a rival in Walter Melville. Put ill would any reader construe the character of Kenelm, did he think that such a

thought increased the bitterness of his sorrow. No sorrow in the thought that a noble nature had been saved from the temptation to a great sin.

The good man does good merely by living. And the good he does may often mar the plans he formed for his own happiness. But he cannot regret that Heaven has permitted him to do good.

What Kenelm did feel is perhaps best explained in the letter to Sir Peter, which is here subjoined:—

“MY DEAREST FATHER,—Never till my dying day shall I forget that tender desire for my happiness with which, overcoming all worldly considerations, no matter at what disappointment to your own cherished plans or ambition for the heir to your name and race, you sent me away from your roof, these words ringing in my ear like the sound of joy-bells, ‘Choose as you will, with my blessing on your choice. I open my heart to admit another child—your wife shall be my daughter.’ It is such an unspeakable comfort to me to recall those words now. Of all human affections gratitude is surely the holiest; and it blends itself with the sweetness of religion when it is gratitude to a father. And, therefore, do not grieve too much for me, when I tell you that the hopes which enchanted me when we parted are not to be fulfilled. Her hand is pledged to another—another with claims upon her preference to which mine cannot be compared; and he is himself, putting aside the accidents of birth and fortune, immeasurably my superior. In that thought—I mean the thought that the man she selects deserves her more than I do, and that in his happiness she will blend her own—I shall find comfort, so soon as I can fairly reason down the first all-engrossing selfishness that follows the sense of unexpected and irremediable loss. Meanwhile you will think it not unnatural that I resort to such aids for change of heart as are afforded by change of scene. I start for the Continent to-night, and shall not rest till I reach Venice, which I have not yet seen. I feel irresistibly attracted towards still canals and gliding gondolas. I will write to you and to my dear mother the day I arrive. And I trust to

write cheerfully, with full accounts of all I see and encounter. Do not, dearest father, in your letters to me revert or allude to that grief, which even the tenderest word from your own tender self might but chafe into pain more sensitive. After all, a disappointed love is a very common lot. And we meet every day men—ay, and women too—who have known it, and are thoroughly cured.

“The manliest of our modern lyrical poets has said very nobly and, no doubt, very justly,

“‘To bear is to conquer our fate.’”

“Ever your loving son,

“K. C.”

CHAPTER IX.

NEARLY a year and a half has elapsed since the date of my last chapter. Two Englishmen were—the one seated, the other reclined at length—on one of the mounds that furrow the ascent of Posilippo. Before them spread the noiseless sea, basking in the sunshine, without visible ripple; to the left there was a distant glimpse through gaps of brushwood of the public gardens and white water of the Chiaja. They were friends who had chanced to meet abroad—unexpectedly—joined company, and travelled together for many months, chiefly in the East. They had been but a few days in Naples. The elder of the two had important affairs in England which ought to have summoned him back long since. But he did not let his friend know this; his affairs seemed to him less important than the duties he owed to one for whom he entertained that deep and noble love which is something stronger than brotherly, for with brotherly affection it combines gratitude and reverence. He knew, too, that his friend was oppressed by a haunting sorrow, of which the cause was divined by one, not revealed by the other.

To leave him, so beloved, alone with that sorrow in strange

lands, was a thought not to be cherished by a friend so tender for in the friendship of this man there was that sort of tenderness which completes a nature, thoroughly manlike, by giving it a touch of the woman's.

It was a day which in our northern climates is that of winter; in the southern clime of Naples it was mild as an English summer day, lingering on the brink of autumn. The sun sloping towards the west, and already gathering around it roseate and purple fleeces. Elsewhere the deep blue sky was without a cloudlet.

Both had been for some minutes silent; at length the man reclining on the grass—it was the younger man—said suddenly, and with no previous hint of the subject introduced, "Lay your hand on your heart, Tom, and answer me truly. Are your thoughts as clear from regrets as the heavens above us are from a cloud? Man takes regret from tears that have ceased to flow, as the heavens takes cloud from the rains that have ceased to fall."

"Regrets?" Ah, I understand, for the loss of the girl I once loved to distraction! No; surely I made that clear to you many, many, many months ago, when I was your guest at Moleswich."

"Ay, but I have never, since then, spoken to you on that subject. I did not dare. It seems to me so natural that a man, in the earlier struggle between love and reason, should say, 'Reason shall conquer, and has conquered;' and yet—and yet—as time glides on, feel that the conquerors who cannot put down rebellion have a very uneasy reign. Answer me not as at Moleswich, during the first struggle, but now, in the after-day, when reaction from struggle comes."

"Upon my honour," answered the friend, "I have had no reaction at all. I was cured entirely, when I had once seen Jessie again, another man's wife, mother to his child, happy in her marriage; and, whether she was changed or not—very different from the sort of wife I should like to marry, now that I am no longer a village farrier."

"And, I remember, you spoke of some other girl whom it would suit you to marry. You have been long abroad from her. Do you ever think of her—think of her still as your

future wife? Can you love her? Can you, who have once loved so faithfully, love again?"

"I am sure of that. I love Emily better than I did when I left England. We correspond. She writes such nice letters." Tom hesitated, blushed, and continued timidly, "I should like to show you one of her letters."

"Do."

Tom drew forth the last of such letters from his breast-pocket.

Kenelm raised himself from the grass, took the letter, and read slowly, carefully, while Tom watched in vain for some approving smile to brighten up the dark beauty of that melancholy face.

Certainly it was the letter a man in love might show with pride to a friend; the letter of a lady, well educated, well brought up, evincing affection modestly, intelligence modestly too; the sort of letter in which a mother who loved her daughter, and approved the daughter's choice, could not have suggested a correction.

As Kenelm gave back the letter, his eyes met his friend's. Those were eager eyes—eyes hungering for praise. Kenelm's heart smote him for that worst of sins in friendship—want of sympathy; and that uneasy heart forced to his lips congratulations, not perhaps quite sincere, but which amply satisfied the lover. In uttering them, Kenelm rose to his feet, threw his arm round his friend's shoulder, and said, "Are you not tired of this place, Tom? I am. Let us go back to England to-morrow." Tom's honest face brightened vividly. "How selfish and egotistical I have been!" continued Kenelm; "I ought to have thought more of you, your career, your marriage—pardon me——"

"Pardon you—pardon! Don't I owe to you all—owe to you Emily herself? If you had never come to Graveleigh, never said, 'Be my friend,' what should I have been now? what—what?"

The next day the two friends quitted Naples *en route* for England, not exchanging many words by the way. The old loquacious crotchety humour of Kenelm had deserted him. A

duller companion than he was you could not have conceived. He might have been the hero of a young lady's novel.

It was only when they parted in London, that Kenelm evinced more secret purpose, more external emotion than one of his heraldic Daces shifting from the bed to the surface of a waveless pond.

"If I have rightly understood you, Tom, all this change in you, all this cure of torturing regret, was wrought—wrought lastingly—wrought so as to leave you heart-free for the world's actions and a home's peace, on that eve when you saw her whose face till then had haunted you, another man's happy wife, and in so seeing her, either her face was changed, or your heart became so."

"Quite true. I might express it otherwise, but the fact remains the same."

"God bless you, Tom; bless you in your career without, in your home within," said Kenelm, wringing his friend's hand at the door of the carriage that was to whirl to love, and wealth, and station, the whilom bully of a village, along the iron groove of that contrivance, which, though now the tritest of prosaic realities, seemed once too poetical for a poet's wildest visions.

CHAPTER X.

A WINTER'S evening at Moleswich. Very different from a winter sunset at Naples. It is intensely cold. There has been a slight fall of snow, accompanied with severe, bright, clear frost, a thin, sprinkling of white on the pavements. Kenelm Chillingly entered the town on foot, no longer a knapsack on his back. Passing through the main street, he paused a moment at the door of Will Somers. The shop was closed. No, he would not stay there to ask in a roundabout way for news. He would go in straightforwardly and manfully to Grasmere. He would take the inmates there by surprise. The sooner he could bring Tom's experience home to himself,

the better. He had schooled his heart to rely on that experience, and it brought him back the old elasticity of his stride. In his lofty carriage and buoyant face were again visible the old haughtiness of the indifferentism that keeps itself aloof from the turbulent emotions and conventional frivolities of those whom its philosophy pities and scorns.

"Ha! ha!" laughed he who like Swift never laughed aloud, and often laughed inaudibly. "Ha! ha! I shall exorcise the ghost of my grief. I shall never be haunted again. If that stormy creature whom love might have maddened into crime, if *he* were cured of love at once by a single visit to the home of her whose face was changed to him—for the smiles and the tears of it had become the property of another man—how much more should I be left without a scar! I, the heir of the Chillinglys! I, the kinsman of a Mivers! I, the pupil of a Welby! I—I, Kenelm Chillingly, to be thus—thus——" Here, in the midst of his boastful soliloquy, the well-remembered brook rushed suddenly upon eye and ear, gleaming and moaning under the wintry moon. Kenelm Chillingly stopped, covered his face with his hands, and burst into a passion of tears.

Recovering himself slowly, he went on along the path, every step of which was haunted by the form of Lily.

He reached the garden gate of Grasmere, lifted the latch, and entered. As he did so, a man, touching his hat, rushed beside, and advanced before him—the village postman. Kenelm drew back, allowing the man to pass to the door, and as he thus drew back, he caught a side view of lighted windows looking on the lawn—the windows of the pleasant drawing-room in which he had first heard Lily speak of her guardian.

The postman left his letters, and regained the garden gate, while Kenelm still stood wistfully gazing on those lighted windows. He had, meanwhile, advanced along the whitened sward to the light, saying to himself, "Let me just see her and her happiness, and then I will knock boldly at the door, and say, 'Good evening, Mrs. Melville.'"

So Kenelm stole across the lawn, and stationing himself at the angle of the wall, looked into the window.

Melville, in dressing-robe and slippers, was seated alone by the fireside. His dog was lazily stretched on the hearth-rug. One by one the features of the room, as the scene of his vanished happiness, grew out from its stillness; the delicately-tinted walls, the dwarf bookcase, with its feminine ornaments on the upper shelf; the piano standing in the same place. Lily's own small low chair; *that* was not in its old place, but thrust into a remote angle, as if it had passed into disuse. Melville was reading a letter, no doubt one of those which the postman had left. Surely the contents were pleasant, for his fair face, always frankly expressive of emotion, brightened wonderfully as he read on. Then he rose with a quick, brisk movement, and pulled the bell hastily.

A neat maidservant entered—a strange face to Kenelm. Melville gave her some brief message. “He has had joyous news,” thought Kenelm. “He has sent for his wife that she may share his joy.” Presently the door opened, and entered not Lily, but Mrs. Cameron.

She looked changed. Her natural quietude of mien and movement the same, indeed, but with more languor in it. Her hair had become grey. Melville was standing by the table as she approached him. He put the letter into her hands with a gay, proud smile, and looked over her shoulder while she read it, pointing with his finger as to some lines that should more emphatically claim her attention.

When she had finished her face reflected his smile. They exchanged a hearty shake of the hand, as if in congratulation. “Ah,” thought Kenelm, “the letter is from Lily. She is abroad. Perhaps the birth of a first-born.”

Just then Blanche, who had not been visible before, emerged from under the table, and as Melville reseated himself by the fireside, sprang into his lap, rubbing herself against his breast. The expression of his face changed; he uttered some low exclamation. Mrs. Cameron took the creature from his lap, stroking it quietly, carried it across the room, and put it outside the door. Then she seated herself beside the artist, placing her hand in his, and they conversed in low tones, till Melville's face again grew bright, and again he took up the letter.

A few minutes later the maidservant entered with the tea-things, and after arranging them on the table approached the window. Kenelm retreated into the shade, the servant closed the shutters and drew the curtains—that scene of quiet home comfort vanished from the eyes of the looker-on.

Kenelm felt strangely perplexed. What had become of Lily? was she indeed absent from her home? Had he conjectured rightly, that the letter which had evidently so gladdened Melville was from her, or was it possible—here a thought of joy seized his heart and held him breathless—was it possible that, after all, she had not married her guardian; had found a home elsewhere—was free? He moved on farther down the lawn, towards the water, that he might better bring before his sight that part of the irregular building in which Lily formerly had her sleeping-chamber, and her “own—own room.”

All was dark there; the shutters inexorably closed. The place with which the childlike girl had associated her most childlike fancies, taming and tending the honey-drinkers destined to pass into fairies, that fragile tenement was not closed against the winds and snows; its doors were drearily open; gaps in the delicate wire-work; of its dainty draperies a few tattered shreds hanging here and there; and on the depopulated floor the moonbeams resting cold and ghostly. No spray from the tiny fountain; its basin chipped and mouldering; the scanty waters therein frozen. Of all the pretty wild ones that Lily fancied she could tame, not one. Ah! yes, there was one, probably not of the old familiar number; a stranger that might have crept in for shelter from the first blasts of winter, and now clung to an angle in the farther wall, its wings folded—asleep, not dead. But Kenelm saw it not; he noticed only the general desolation of the spot.

“Natural enough,” thought he. “She has outgrown all such pretty silliness. A wife cannot remain a child. Still, if she had belonged to me——” The thought choked even his inward, unspoken utterance. He turned away, paused a moment under the leafless boughs of the great willow still dipping into the brook, and then with impatient steps strode back towards the garden gate.

"No—no—no. I cannot now enter that house and ask for Mrs. Melville. Trial enough for one night to stand on the old ground. I will return to the town. I will call at Jessie's, and there I can learn if she indeed be happy."

So he went on by the path along the brook side, the night momentarily colder and colder, and momentarily clearer and clearer, while the moon noiselessly glided into loftier heights. Wrapt in his abstracted thoughts, when he came to the spot in which the path split in twain, he did not take that which led more directly to the town. His steps, naturally enough following the train of his thoughts, led him along the path with which the object of his thoughts was associated. He found himself on the burial-ground, and in front of the old ruined tomb with the effaced inscription.

"Ah! child—child!" he murmured almost audibly, "what depths of woman tenderness lay concealed in thee! In what loving sympathy with the past—sympathy only vouchsafed to the tenderest women and the highest poets—didst thou lay thy flowers on the tomb, to which thou didst give a poet's history interpreted by a woman's heart, little dreaming that beneath the stone slept a hero of thine own fallen race."

He passed beneath the shadow of the yews, whose leaves no winter wind can strew, and paused at the ruined tomb—no flower now on its stone, only a sprinkling of snow at the foot of it—sprinklings of snow at the foot of each humbler grave-mound. Motionless in the frosty air rested the pointed church-spire, and through the frosty air, higher and higher up the arch of heaven, soared the unpausing moon. Around, and below, and above her, the stars which no science can number; yet not less difficult to number are the thoughts, desires, aspirations, which, in a space of time briefer than a winter's night, can pass through the infinite deeps of a human soul.

From his stand by the Gothic tomb, Kenelm looked along the churchyard for the infant's grave, which Lily's pious care had bordered with votive flowers. Yes, in that direction there was still a gleam of colour; could it be of flowers in that biting winter time?—the moon is so deceptive, it silvers into the hue of the jessamines the green of the everlastings.

He passed towards the white grave-mound. His sight had duped him; no pale flower, no green "everlasting" on its neglected border—only brown mould, withered stalks, streaks of snow.

"And yet," he said sadly, "she told me she had never broken a promise; and she had given a promise to the dying child. Ah! she is too happy now to think of the dead."

So murmuring, he was about to turn towards the town, when close by that child's grave he saw another. Round that other there were pale "everlastings," dwarfed blossoms of the laurestinus; at the four angles the drooping bud of a Christmas rose; at the head of the grave was a white stone, its sharp edges cutting into the starlit air; and on the head, in fresh letters, were inscribed these words:—

To the Memory of
L. M.
Aged 17,
Died October 29, A.D. 18—,
This stone, above the grave to which her mortal
remains are consigned, beside that of an infant not
more sinless, is consecrated by those who
most mourn and miss her,
ISABEL CAMERON,
WALTER MELVILLE.
"Suffer the little children to come unto me."

CHAPTER XI.

THE next morning Mr. Emlyn, passing from his garden to the town of Moleswich, descried a human form stretched on the burial-ground, stirring restlessly but very slightly, as if with an involuntary shiver, and uttering broken sounds, very faintly heard, like the moans that a man in pain strives to suppress and cannot.

The rector hastened to the spot. The man was lying, his face downward, on a grave-mound, not dead, not asleep.

"Poor fellow! overtaken by drink, I fear," thought the gentle pastor; and as it was the habit of his mind to compassionate error even more than grief, he accosted the supposed sinner in

very soothing tones—trying to raise him from the ground—and with very kindly words.

Then the man lifted his face from its pillow on the grave-mound, looked round him dreamily into the grey, blank air of the cheerless morn, and rose to his feet quietly and slowly.

The vicar was startled; he recognised the face of him he had last seen in the magnificent affluence of health and strength. But the character of the face was changed—so changed! its old serenity of expression, at once grave and sweet, succeeded by a wild trouble in the heavy eyelids and trembling lips.

“Mr. Chillingly—you! Is it possible?”

“Varus, Varus,” exclaimed Kenelm, passionately, “what hast thou done with my legions?”

At that quotation of the well-known greeting of Augustus to his unfortunate general, the scholar recoiled. Had his young friend’s mind deserted him—dazed, perhaps, by over-study?

He was soon reassured; Kenelm’s face settled back into calm, though a dreary calm, like that of the wintry day.

“I beg pardon, Mr. Emlyn; I had not quite shaken off the hold of a strange dream. I dreamed that I was worse off than Augustus; he did not lose the world when the legions he had trusted to another vanished into a grave.”

Here Kenelm linked his arm in that of the rector—on which he leaned rather heavily—and drew him on from the burial-ground into the open space where the two paths met.

“But how long have you returned to Moleswich?” asked Emlyn; “and how came you to choose so damp a bed for your morning slumbers?”

“The wintry cold crept into my veins when I stood in the burial-ground, and I was very weary; I had no sleep at night. Do not let me take you out of your way; I am going on to Grasmere. So I see, by the record on a gravestone, that it is more than a year ago since Mr. Melville lost his wife.”

“Wife? He never married.”

“What!” cried Kenelm. “Whose, then, is that gravestone—‘L. M.’?”

“Alas! it is our poor Lily’s.”

“And she died unmarried?”

As Kenelm said this he looked up, and the sun broke out from the gloomy haze of the morning. "I may claim thee, then," he thought within himself—"claim thee as mine when we meet again."

"Unmarried—yes," resumed the vicar. "She was indeed betrothed to her guardian; they were to have been married in the autumn, on his return from the Rhine. He went there to paint on the spot itself his great picture, which is now so famous—'Roland, the Hermit Knight, looking towards the convent lattice for a sight of the Holy Nun.' Melville had scarcely gone before the symptoms of the disease which proved fatal to poor Lily betrayed themselves; they baffled all medical skill—rapid decline. She was always very delicate, but no one detected in her the seeds of consumption. Melville only returned a day or two before her death. Dear childlike Lily! how we all mourned for her!—not least the poor, who believed in her fairy charms."

"And least of all, it appears, the man she was to have married."

"He?—Melville? How can you wrong him so? His grief was intense—overpowering—for the time."

"For the time! what time?" muttered Kenelm, in tones too low for the pastor's ear.

They moved on silently. Mr. Emlyn resumed:

"You noticed the text on Lily's gravestone—'Suffer the little children to come unto me'? She dictated it herself the day before she died. I was with her then, so I was at the last."

"Were you—were you—at the last—the last? Good-day, Mr. Emlyn; we are just in sight of the garden gate. And—excuse me—I wish to see Mr. Melville alone."

"Well, then, good-day; but if you are making any stay in the neighbourhood, will you not be our guest? We have a room at your service."

"I thank you gratefully; but I return to London in an hour or so. Hold, a moment. You were with her at the last? She was resigned to die?"

"Resigned! that is scarcely the word. The smile left upon her lips was not that of human resignation; it was the smile of a divine joy."

CHAPTER XII.

"YES, sir, Mr. Melville is at home in his studio."

Kenelm followed the maid across the hall into a room not built at the date of Kenelm's former visits to the house: the artist, making Grasmere his chief residence after Lily's death, had added it at the back of the neglected place wherein Lily had engaged "the souls of infants unbaptised."

A lofty room, with a casement partially darkened, to the bleak north; various sketches on the walls; gaunt specimens of antique furniture, and of gorgeous Italian silks, scattered about in confused disorder; one large picture on its easel curtained; another as large, and half finished, before which stood the painter. He turned quickly, as Kenelm entered the room unannounced, let fall brush and palette, came up to him eagerly, grasped his hand, drooped his head on Kenelm's shoulder, and said, in a voice struggling with evident and strong emotion:

"Since we parted, such grief! such a loss!"

"I know it; I have seen her grave. Let us not speak of it. Why so needlessly revive your sorrow? So—so—your sanguine hopes are fulfilled—the world at last has done you justice? Emlyn tells me that you have painted a very famous picture."

Kenelm had seated himself as he thus spoke. The painter still stood with dejected attitude on the middle of the floor, and brushed his hand over his moistened eyes once or twice before he answered, "Yes, wait a moment, don't talk of fame yet. Bear with me. The sudden sight of you unnerved me."

The artist here seated himself also on an old worm-eaten Gothic chest, rumpling and chafing the golden or tinselled threads of the embroidered silk, so rare and so time-worn, flung over the Gothic chest, so rare also, and so worm-eaten.

Kenelm looked through half-closed lids at the artist, and his lips, before slightly curved with a secret scorn, became gravely compressed. In Melville's struggle to conceal emotion the strong man recognised a strong man—recognised, and yet

only wondered; wondered how such a man, to whom Lily had pledged her hand, could so soon after the loss of Lily go on painting pictures, and care for any praise bestowed on a yard of canvas.

In a very few minutes Melville recommenced conversation—no more reference to Lily than if she had never existed. “Yes, my last picture has been indeed a success—a reward complete, if tardy, for all the bitterness of former struggles made in vain, for the galling sense of injustice, the anguish of which only an artist knows, when unworthy rivals are ranked before him.

“‘Foes quick to blame, and friends afraid to praise.’

True that I have still much to encounter; the cliques still seek to disparage me, but between me and the cliques there stands at last the giant form of the public, and at last critics of graver weight than the cliques have deigned to accord to me a higher rank than even the public yet acknowledge. Ah! Mr. Chillingly, you do not profess to be a judge of paintings, but, excuse me, just look at this letter. I received it only last night from the greatest connoisseur of my art, certainly in England, perhaps in Europe.” Here Melville drew, from the side-pocket of his picturesque *moyen âge* surtout, a letter signed by a name authoritative to all who,—being painters themselves—acknowledge authority in one who could no more paint a picture himself than Addison, the ablest critic of the greatest poem modern Europe has produced, could have written ten lines of the *Paradise Lost*—and thrust the letter into Kenelm’s hand. Kenelm read it listlessly, with an increased contempt for an artist who could so find in gratified vanity consolation for the life gone from earth. But, listlessly as he read the letter, the sincere and fervent enthusiasm of the laudatory contents impressed him, and the pre-eminent authority of the signature could not be denied.

The letter was written on the occasion of Melville’s recent election to the dignity of R.A., successor to a very great artist whose death had created a vacancy in the Academy. He returned the letter to Melville, saying, “This is the letter I saw you reading last night as I looked in at your window

Indeed, for a man who cares for the opinion of other men, this letter is very flattering; and for the painter who cares for money, it must be very pleasant to know by how many guineas every inch of his canvas may be covered." Unable longer to control his passions of rage, of scorn, of agonising grief, Kenelm then burst forth,—“Man, man, whom I once accepted as a teacher on human life, a teacher to warm, to brighten, to exalt mine own indifferent, dreamy, slow-pulsed self! has not the one woman whom thou didst select out of this overcrowded world to be bone of thy bone, flesh of thy flesh, vanished evermore from the earth—little more than a year since her voice was silenced, her heart ceased to beat? But how slight is such loss to thy life, compared to the worth of a compliment that flatters thy vanity!”

The artist rose to his feet with an indignant impulse. But the angry flush faded from his cheek as he looked on the countenance of his rebuker. He walked up to him, and attempted to take his hand, but Kenelm snatched it scornfully from his grasp.

“Poor friend,” said Melville, sadly and soothingly, “I did not think you loved her thus deeply. Pardon me.” He drew a chair close to Kenelm’s, and after a brief pause went on thus, in very earnest tones—“I am not so heartless, not so forgetful of my loss as you suppose. But reflect, you have but just learned of her death, you are under the first shock of grief. More than a year has been given to me for gradual submission to the decree of Heaven. Now listen to me, and try to listen calmly. I am many years older than you, I ought to know better the conditions on which man holds the tenure of life. Life is composite, many-sided, nature does not permit it to be lastingly monopolised by a single passion, or while yet in the prime of its strength, to be lastingly blighted by a single sorrow. Survey the great mass of our common race, engaged in the various callings, some the humblest, some the loftiest, by which the business of the world is carried on,—can you justly despise as heartless the poor trader, or the great statesman, when it may be but a few days after the loss of some one nearest and dearest to his heart, the trader reopens his shop, the statesman reappears

in his office? But in me, the votary of art, in me you behold but the weakness of gratified vanity—if I feel joy in the hope that my art may triumph, and my country may add my name to the list of those who contribute to her renown—where and when ever lived an artist not sustained by that hope, in privation, in sickness, in the sorrows he must share with his kind? Nor is this hope that of a feminine vanity, a sicklier craving for applause; it identifies itself with glorious services to our land, to our race, to the children of all after time. Our art cannot triumph, our name cannot live, unless we achieve a something that tends to beautify or ennoble the world in which we accept the common heritage of toil and of sorrow, in order, therefrom, to work out for successive multitudes a recreation and a joy."

While the artist thus spoke Kenelm lifted towards his face eyes charged with suppressed tears. And the face, kindling as the artist vindicated himself from the young man's bitter charge, became touchingly sweet in its grave expression at the close of the not ignoble defence.

"Enough," said Kenelm, rising. "There is a ring of truth in what you say. I can conceive the artist's, the poet's escape from this world, when all therein is death and winter, into the world he creates and colours at his will with the hues of summer. So, too, I can conceive how the man whose life is sternly fitted into the grooves of a trader's calling, or a statesman's duties, is borne on by the force of custom, afar from such brief halting-spot as a grave. But I am no poet, no artist, no trader, no statesman; I have no calling, my life is fixed into no grooves. Adieu."

"Hold a moment. Not now, but somewhat later, ask yourself whether any life can be permitted to wander in space, a monad detached from the lives of others. Into some groove or other, sooner or later, it must settle, and be borne on obedient to the laws of nature and the responsibility to God."

CHAPTER XIII.

KENELM went back alone, and with downcast looks, through the desolate, flowerless garden, when at the other side of the gate a light touch was laid on his arm. He looked up, and recognised Mrs. Cameron.

"I saw you," she said, "from my window coming to the house, and I have been waiting for you here. I wished to speak to you alone. Allow me to walk beside you."

Kenelm inclined his head assentingly, but made no answer.

They were nearly midway between the cottage and the burial-ground when Mrs. Cameron resumed, her tones quick and agitated, contrasting her habitual languid quietude—

"I have a great weight on my mind; it ought not to be remorse. I acted as I thought in my conscience for the best. But oh, Mr. Chillingly, if I erred—if I judged wrongly—do say you at least forgive me." She seized his hand, pressing it convulsively. Kenelm muttered inaudibly—a sort of dreary stupor had succeeded to the intense excitement of grief. Mrs. Cameron went on—

"You could not have married Lily—you know you could not. The secret of her birth could not, in honour, have been concealed from your parents. They could not have consented to your marriage; and even if you had persisted, without that consent and in spite of that secret, to press for it—even had she been yours——"

"Might she not be living now?" cried Kenelm, fiercely.

"No—no; the secret must have come out. The cruel world would have discovered it; it would have reached her ears. The shame of it would have killed her. How bitter then would have been her short interval of life! As it is, she passed away—resigned and happy. But I own that I did not, could not, understand her, could not believe her feeling for you to be so deep. I did think, that when she knew her own heart, she would find that love for her guardian was its strongest affection. She assented, apparently without a pang, to become his wife;

and she seemed always so fond of him, and what girl would not be? But I was mistaken—deceived. From the day you saw her last, she began to fade away; but then Walter left a few days after, and I thought that it was his absence she mourned. She never owned to me that it was yours—never till too late—too late—just when my sad letter had summoned him back, only three days before she died. Had I known earlier while yet there was hope of recovery, I must have written to you, even though the obstacles to your union with her remained the same. Oh, again I implore you, say that if I erred you forgive me. She did, kissing me so tenderly. She did forgive me? Will not you? It would have been her wish.”

“Her wish? Do you think I could disobey it? I know not if I have anything to forgive. If I have, now could I not forgive one who loved her? God comfort us both.”

He bent down and kissed Mrs. Cameron’s forehead. The poor woman threw her arm gratefully, lovingly round him, and burst into tears.

When she had recovered her emotion, she said—

“And now, it is with so much lighter a heart that I can fulfil her commission to you. But, before I place this in your hands, can you make me one promise? Never tell Melville how she loved you. She was so careful he should never guess that. And if he knew it was the thought of union with him which had killed her, he would never smile again.”

“You would not ask such a promise if you could guess how sacred from all the world I hold the secret that you confide to me. By that secret the grave is changed into an altar. Our bridals now are only a while deferred.”

Mrs. Cameron placed a letter in Kenelm’s hand, and murmuring in accents broken by a sob, “She gave it to me the day before her last,” left him, and with quick vacillating steps hurried back towards the cottage. She now understood *him*, at last, too well not to feel that on opening that letter he must be alone with the dead.

It is strange that we need have so little practical household knowledge of each other to be in love. Never till then had

Kenelm's eyes rested upon Lily's handwriting. And he now gazed at the formal address on the envelope with a sort of awe. Unknown handwriting coming to him from an unknown world—delicate, tremulous handwriting—handwriting not of one grown up, yet not of a child who had long to live.

He turned the envelope over and over—not impatiently, as does the lover whose heart beats at the sound of the approaching footstep, but lingeringly, timidly. He would not break the seal.

He was now so near the burial-ground. Where should the first letter ever received from her—the sole letter he ever could receive—be so reverentially, lovingly read, as at her grave?

He walked on to the burial-ground, sat down by the grave, broke the envelope; a poor little ring, with a poor little single turquoise, rolled out and rested at his feet. The letter contained only these words:

“The ring comes back to you. I could not live to marry another. I never knew how I loved you—till, till I began to pray that you might not love me too much. Darling! darling! good-bye, darling!

“LILY.

“Don't let Lion ever see this, or ever know what it says to you. He is so good, and deserves to be so happy. Do you remember the day of the ring? Darling! darling!”

CHAPTER XIV.

SOMEWHAT more than another year has rolled away. It is early spring in London. The trees in the park and squares are budding into leaf and blossom. Leopold Travers has had a brief but serious conversation with his daughter, and is now gone forth on horseback. Handsome and graceful still, Leopold Travers when in London is pleased to find himself scarcely less the fashion with the young than he was when himself in youth. He is now riding along the banks of the Serpentine, no one

better mounted, better dressed, better looking, or talking with greater fluency on the topics which interest his companions.

Cecilia is in the smaller drawing-room, which is exclusively appropriated to her use—alone with Lady Glenalvon.

LADY GLENALVON. "I own, my dear, dear Cecilia, that I arrange myself at last on the side of your father. How earnestly at one time I had hoped that Kenelm Chillingly might woo and win the bride that seemed to me most fitted to adorn and to cheer his life, I need not say. But when at Exmundham he asked me to befriend his choice of another, to reconcile his mother to that choice—evidently not a suitable one—I gave him up. And though that affair is at an end, he seems little likely ever to settle down to practical duties and domestic habits, an idle wanderer over the face of the earth, only heard of in remote places and with strange companions. Perhaps he may never return to England."

CECILIA.—"He is in England now, and in London."

LADY GLENALVON.—"You amaze me! Who told you so?"

CECILIA.—"His father, who is with him. Sir Peter called yesterday, and spoke to me so kindly." Cecilia here turned aside her face to conceal the tears that had started to her eyes.

LADY GLENALVON.—"Did Mr. Travers see Sir Peter?"

CECILIA.—"Yes; and I think it was something that passed between them which made my father speak to me—for the first time—almost sternly."

LADY GLENALVON.—"In urging Gordon Chillingly's suit."

CECILIA.—"Commanding me to reconsider my rejection of it. He has contrived to fascinate my father."

LADY GLENALVON.—"So he has me. Of course you might choose among other candidates for your hand one of much higher worldly rank, of much larger fortune, yet, as you have already rejected them, Gordon's merits become still more entitled to a fair hearing. He has already leapt into a position that mere rank and mere wealth cannot attain. Men of all parties speak highly of his parliamentary abilities. He is already marked in public opinion as a coming man—a future minister of the highest grade. He has youth and good looks, his moral character is without a blemish, yet his manners are so free from affected

austerity, so frank, so genial. Any woman might be pleased with his companionship; and you, with your intellect, your culture,—you, so born for high station,—you of all women might be proud to partake the anxieties of his career, and the rewards of his ambition.”

CECILIA (clasping her hands tightly together)—“I cannot, I cannot. He may be all you say—I know nothing against Mr. Chillingly Gordon—but my whole nature is antagonistic to his, and even were it not so——”

She stopped abruptly, a deep blush warming up her fair face, and retreating to leave it coldly pale.

LADY GLENALVON (tenderly kissing her).—“You have not, then, even yet conquered the first maiden fancy; the ungrateful one is still remembered?”

Cecilia bowed her head on her friend's breast, and murmured imploringly, “Don't speak against him, he has been so unhappy. How much he must have loved!”

“But it is not you whom he loved.”

“Something here, something at my heart, tells me that he will love me yet; and if not, I am contented to be his friend.”

CHAPTER XV.

WHILE the conversation just related took place between Cecilia and Lady Glenalvon, Gordon Chillingly was seated alone with Mivers in the comfortable apartment of the cynical old bachelor. Gordon had breakfasted with his kinsman, but that meal was long over; the two men having found much to talk about on matters very interesting to the younger, nor without interest to the elder one.

It is true that Chillingly Gordon had, within the very short space of time that had elapsed since his entrance into the House of Commons, achieved one of those reputations which mark out a man for early admission into the progressive career of office—not a very showy reputation, but a very solid one. He had

none of the gifts of the genuine orator, no enthusiasm, no imagination, no imprudent bursts of fiery words from a passionate heart. But he had all the gifts of an exceedingly telling speaker—a clear metallic voice; well-bred, appropriate action, not less dignified for being somewhat too quiet; readiness for extempore replies; industry and method for prepared expositions of principle or fact. But his principal merit with the chiefs of the assembly was in the strong good sense and worldly tact which made him a safe speaker. For this merit he was largely indebted to his frequent conferences with Chillingly Mivers. That gentleman, whether owing to his social qualities or to the influence of *The Londoner* on public opinion, enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with the chiefs of all parties, and was up to his ears in the wisdom of the world. “Nothing,” he would say, “hurts a young Parliamentary speaker like violence in opinion, one way or the other. Shun it. Always allow that much may be said on both sides. When the chiefs of your own side suddenly adopt a violence, you can go with them or against them, according as best suits your own book.”

“So,” said Mivers, reclined on his sofa, and approaching the end of his second Trabuco (he never allowed himself more than two), “so I think we have pretty well settled the tone you must take in your speech to-night. It is a great occasion.”

“True. It is the *first* time in which the debate has been arranged so that I may speak at ten o’clock or later. That in itself is a great leap; and it is a Cabinet minister whom I am to answer—luckily, he is a very dull fellow. Do you think I might hazard a joke—at least a witticism?”

“At his expense? Decidedly not. Though his office compels him to introduce this measure, he was by no means in its favour when it was discussed in the Cabinet; and though, as you say, he is dull, it is precisely that sort of dulness which is essential to the formation of every respectable Cabinet. Joke at *him*, indeed! Learn that gentle dulness never loves a joke—at its own expense. Vain man! seize the occasion which your blame of his measure affords you to secure his praise of yourself; compliment him. Enough of politics. It never does to think too much over what one has already decided to say. Brooding

over it, one may become too much in earnest, and commit an indiscretion. So Kenelm has come back?"

"Yes. I heard that news last night, at White's, from Travers. Sir Peter had called on Travers."

"Travers still favours your suit to the heiress?"

"More, I think, than ever. Success in Parliament has great effect on a man who has success in fashion and respects the opinion of clubs. But last night he was unusually cordial. Between you and me, I think he is a little afraid that Kenelm may yet be my rival. I gathered that from a hint he let fall of the unwelcome nature of Sir Peter's talk to him."

"Why has Travers conceived a dislike to poor Kenelm? He seemed partial enough to him once."

"Ay, but not as a son-in-law, even before I had a chance of becoming so. And when, after Kenelm appeared at Exmundham while Travers was staying there, Travers learned, I suppose from Lady Chillingly, that Kenelm had fallen in love with and wanted to marry some other girl, who it seems rejected him; and still more when he heard that Kenelm had been subsequently travelling on the Continent in company with a low-lived fellow, the drunken, riotous son of a farrier, you may well conceive how so polished and sensible a man as Leopold Travers would dislike the idea of giving his daughter to one so little likely to make an agreeable son-in-law. Bah! I have no fear of Kenelm. By the way, did Sir Peter say if Kenelm had quite recovered his health? He was at death's door some eighteen months ago, when Sir Peter and Lady Chillingly were summoned to town by the doctors."

"My dear Gordon, I fear there is no chance of your succession to Exmundham. Sir Peter says that his wandering Hercules is as stalwart as ever, and more equable in temperament, more taciturn and grave—in short, less odd. But when you say you have no fear of Kenelm's rivalry, do you mean only as to Cecilia Travers?"

"Neither as to that nor as to anything in life; and as to the succession to Exmundham, it is his to leave as he pleases, and I have cause to think he would never leave it to me. More likely to Parson John or the parson's son—or why not to yourself?"

I often think that for the prizes immediately set before my ambition I am better off without land: land is a great obfuscator."

"Humph, there is some truth in that. Yet the fear of land and obfuscation does not seem to operate against your suit to Cecilia Travers?"

"Her father is likely enough to live till I may be contented to 'rest and be thankful' in the Upper House; and I should not like to be a landless peer."

"You are right there; but I should tell you that, now Kenelm has come back, Sir Peter has set his heart on his son's being your rival."

"For Cecilia?"

"Perhaps; but certainly for Parliamentary reputation. The senior member for the county means to retire, and Sir Peter has been urged to allow his son to be brought forward—from what I hear, with the certainty of success."

"What! in spite of that wonderful speech of his on coming of age?"

"Pooh! that is now understood to have been but a bad joke on the new ideas, and their organs, including *The Londoner*. But if Kenelm does come into the House, it will not be on your side of the question; and unless I greatly overrate his abilities—which very likely I do—he will not be a rival to despise. Except, indeed, that he may have one fault which in the present day would be enough to unfit him for public life."

"And what is that fault?"

"Treason to the blood of the Chillinglys. This is the age, in England, when one cannot be too much of a Chillingly. I fear that if Kenelm does become bewildered by a political abstraction—call it, no matter what, say, 'love of his country,' or some such old-fashioned crotchet—I fear—I greatly fear—that he may be—in earnest."

CHAPTER THE LAST.

It was a field night in the House of Commons—an adjourned debate, opened by George Belvoir, who had been, the last two years, very slowly creeping on in the favour, or rather the indulgence of the House, and more than justifying Kenelm's prediction of his career. Heir to a noble name and vast estates, extremely hard-working, very well informed, it was impossible that he should not creep on. That night he spoke sensibly enough, assisting his memory by frequent references to his notes; listened to courteously, and greeted with a faint 'Hear, hear!' of relief when he had done.

Then the House gradually thinned till nine o'clock, at which hour it became very rapidly crowded. A cabinet minister had solemnly risen, deposited on the table before him a formidable array of printed papers, including a corpulent blue-book. Leaning his arm on the red box, he commenced with this awe-compelling sentence:

"Sir,—I join issue with the right honourable gentleman opposite. He says this is not raised as a party question. I deny it. Her Majesty's Government are put upon their trial."

Here there were cheers, so loudly, and so rarely greeting a speech from that cabinet minister, that he was put out, and had much to "hum" and to "ha," before he could recover the thread of his speech. Then he went on, with unbroken but lethargic fluency; read long extracts from the public papers, inflicted a whole page from the blue book, wound up with a peroration of respectable platitudes, glanced at the clock, saw that he had completed the hour which a cabinet minister who does not profess to be oratorical is expected to speak, but not to exceed; and sat down.

Up rose a crowd of eager faces, from which the Speaker, as previously arranged with the party whips, selected one—a young face, hardy, intelligent, emotionless.

I need not say that it was the face of Chillingly Gordon.

His position that night was one that required dexterous

management and delicate tact. He habitually supported the Government ; his speeches had been hitherto in their favour. On this occasion he differed from the Government. The difference was known to the chiefs of the Opposition, and hence the arrangement of the whips, that he should speak for the first time after ten o'clock, and for the first time in reply to a cabinet minister. It is a position in which a young party man makes or mars his future. Chillingly Gordon spoke from the third row behind the Government ; he had been duly cautioned by Mivers not to affect a conceited independence, or an adhesion to "violence" in ultra-liberal opinions, by seating himself below the gangway. Speaking thus, amid the rank and file of the Ministerial supporters, any opinion at variance with the mouthpieces of the Treasury Bench would be sure to produce a more effective sensation than if delivered from the ranks of the mutinous Bashi Bazouks divided by the gangway from better disciplined forces. His first brief sentences enthralled the House, conciliated the Ministerial side, kept the Opposition side in suspense. The whole speech was, indeed, felicitously adroit, and especially in this, that while in opposition to the Government as a whole, it expressed the opinions of a powerful section of the cabinet, which, though at present a minority, yet being the most enamoured of a New Idea, the progress of the age would probably render a safe investment for the confidence which honest Gordon reposed in its chance of beating its colleagues.

It was not, however, till Gordon had concluded, that the cheers of his audience—impulsive and hearty as are the cheers of that assembly, when the evidence of intellect is unmistakable—made manifest to the gallery and the reporters the full effect of the speech he had delivered. The chief of the Opposition whispered to his next neighbour, "I wish we could get that man." The cabinet minister whom Gordon had answered—more pleased with a personal compliment to himself than displeased with an attack on the measure his office compelled him to advocate—whispered to his chief, "That is a man we must not lose."

Two gentlemen in the Speaker's gallery, who had sat there from the opening of the debate, now quitted their places. Coming into the lobby, they found themselves commingled with

a crowd of members who had also quitted their seats, after Gordon's speech, in order to discuss its merits, as they gathered round the refreshment table for oranges or soda-water. Among them were George Belvoir, who, on sight of the younger of the two gentlemen issuing from the Speaker's gallery, accosted him with friendly greeting :

"Ha ! Chillingly, how are you ? Did not know you were in town. Been here all the evening ? Yes ; very good debate. How did you like Gordon's speech ?"

"I liked yours much better."

"Mine !" cried George, very much flattered and very much surprised. "Oh ! mine was a mere humdrum affair, a plain statement of the reasons for the vote I should give. And Gordon's was anything but that. You did not like his opinions ?"

"I don't know what his opinions are. But I did not like his ideas."

"I don't quite understand you. What ideas ?"

"The new ones ; by which it is shown how rapidly a great state can be made small."

Here Mr. Belvoir was taken aside by a brother member, on an important matter to be brought before the committee on salmon fisheries, on which they both served ; and Kenelm, with his companion, Sir Peter, threaded his way through the crowded lobby, and disappeared. Emerging into the broad space, with its lofty clock-tower, Sir Peter halted, and pointing towards the old Abbey, half in shadow, half in light, under the tranquil moonbeams, said :

"It tells much for the duration of a people, when it accords with the instinct of immortality in a man ; when an honoured tomb is deemed recompense for the toils and dangers of a noble life. How much of the history of England, Nelson summed up in the simple words—'Victory at Westminster Abbey.'"

"Admirably expressed, my dear father," said Kenelm, briefly.

"I agree with your remark, which I overheard, on Gordon's speech," resumed Sir Peter. "It was wonderfully clever ; yet I should have been sorry to hear you speak it. It is not

by such sentiments that Nelsons become great. If such sentiments should ever be national, the cry will not be 'Victory or Westminster Abbey!' but 'Defeat and the Three per Cents!'"

Pleased with his own unwonted animation, and with the sympathising half-smile on his son's taciturn lips, Sir Peter then proceeded more immediately to the subjects which pressed upon his heart. Gordon's success in Parliament, Gordon's suit to Cecilia Travers, favoured, as Sir Peter had learned, by her father, rejected as yet by herself, were somehow inseparably mixed up in Sir Peter's mind and his words, as he sought to kindle his son's emulation. He dwelt on the obligations which a country imposed on its citizens, especially on the young and vigorous generation to which the destinies of those to follow were intrusted; and with these stern obligations he combined all the cheering and tender associations which an English public man connects with an English home: the wife with a smile to soothe the cares, and a mind to share the aspirations, of a life that must go through labour to achieve renown; thus, in all he said, binding together, as if they could not be disparted, Ambition and Cecilia.

His son did not interrupt him by a word: Sir Peter in his eagerness not noticing that Kenelm had drawn him aside from the direct thoroughfare, and had now made halt in the middle of Westminster bridge, bending over the massive parapet and gazing abstractedly upon the waves of the starlit river. On the right the stately length of the people's legislative palace, so new in its date, so elaborately in each detail ancient in its form, stretching on towards the lowly and jagged roofs of penury and crime. Well might these be so near to the halls of a people's legislative palace;—near to the heart of every legislator for a people must be the mighty problem how to increase a people's splendour and its virtue, and how to diminish its penury and its crime.

"How strange it is," said Kenelm, still bending over the parapet, "that throughout all my desultory wanderings I have ever been attracted towards the sight and the sound of running waters, even those of the humblest rill! Of what

thoughts, of what dreams, of what memories, colouring the history of my past, the waves of the humblest rill could speak, were the waves themselves not such supreme philosophers—roused indeed on their surface, vexed by a check to their own course, but so indifferent to all that makes gloom or death to the mortals who think and dream and feel beside their banks.”

“Bless me,” said Peter to himself, “the boy has got back to his old vein of humours and melancholies. He has not heard a word I have been saying. Travers is right. He will never do anything in life. Why did I christen him Kenelm? he might as well have been christened Peter.” Still, loth to own that his eloquence had been expended in vain, and that the wish of his heart was doomed to expire disappointed, Sir Peter said aloud, “You have not listened to what I said; Kenelm, you grieve me.”

“Grieve you! you! do not say that, father, dear father. Listen to you! Every word you have said has sunk into the deepest deep of my heart. Pardon my foolish, purposeless snatch of talk to myself—it is but my way, only my way, dear father!”

“Boy, boy,” cried Sir Peter, with tears in his voice, “if you could get out of those odd ways of yours I should be so thankful. But if you cannot, nothing you can do shall grieve me. Only, let me say this; running waters have had a great charm for you. With a humble rill you associate thoughts, dreams, memories in your past. But now you halt by the stream of the mighty river—before you the senate of an empire wider than Alexander’s; behind you the market of a commerce to which that of Tyre was a pitiful trade. Look farther down, those squalid hovels, how much there to redeem or to remedy; and out of sight, but not very distant, the nation’s Walhalla: ‘Victory or Westminster Abbey!’ The humble rill has witnessed your past. Has the mighty river no effect on your future? The rill keeps no record of your past: shall the river keep no record of your future? Ah, boy, boy, I see you are dreaming still—no use talking. Let us go home.”

"I was not dreaming, I was telling myself that the time had come to replace the old Kenelm with the new ideas, by a new Kenelm with the Ideas of Old. Ah! perhaps we must—at whatever cost to ourselves,—we must go through the romance of life before we clearly detect what is grand in its realities. I can no longer lament that I stand estranged from the objects and pursuits of my race. I have learned how much I have with them in common. I have known love; I have known sorrow."

Kenelm paused a moment, only a moment, then lifted the head which, during that pause, had drooped, and stood erect at the full height of his stature, startling his father by the change that had passed over his face; lip—eye—his whole aspect eloquent with a resolute enthusiasm, too grave to be the flash of a passing moment.

"Ay, ay," he said, "Victory or Westminster Abbey! The world is a battle-field in which the worst wounded are the deserters, stricken as they seek to fly, and hushing the groans that would betray the secret of their inglorious hiding-place. The pain of wounds received in the thick of the fight is scarcely felt in the joy of service to some honoured cause, and is amply atoned by the reverence for noble scars. My choice is made. Not that of deserter, that of soldier in the ranks."

"It will not be long before you rise from the ranks, my boy, if you hold fast to the Idea of Old, symbolised in the English battle-cry—'Victory or Westminster Abbey.'"

So saying, Sir Peter took his son's arm, leaning on it proudly; and so, into the crowded thoroughfares, from the halting-place on the modern bridge that spans the legendary river, passes the Man of the Young Generation to fates beyond the verge of the horizon to which the eyes of *my* generation must limit their wistful gaze.

THE END.



RIENZI.

RIENZI

THE LAST OF THE ROMAN TRIBUNES

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

*Then turn we to her latest Tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame—
The friend of Petrarch—hope of Italy—
Rienzi, last of Romans! While the tree
Of Freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf,
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be—
The Forum's champion, and the People's chief—
Her new-born Numa thou!*

CHILDE HAROLD, cant. iv. stanza 114.

*Amidst the indulgence of enthusiasm and eloquence, Petrarch, Italy, and Europe,
were astonished by a revolution, which realized for a moment his most splendid
visions.*—GIBBON, chap. lxx.

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

LONDON: BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

NEW YORK: 9 LAFAYETTE PLACE

DEDICATION OF RIENZI.

TO

ALESSANDRO MANZONI,

AS

TO THE GENIUS OF THE PLACE,

Are Dedicated

THESE FRUITS

GATHERED ON

THE SOIL OF ITALIAN FICTION.

LONDON, *Dec. 1, 1835.*

DEDICATION,

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST COLLECTED EDITION OF THE
AUTHOR'S WORKS IN 1840.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

In inscribing with your beloved and honoured name this Collection of my Works, I could wish that the fruits of my manhood were worthier of the tender and anxious pains bestowed upon my education in youth.

Left yet young, and with no ordinary accomplishments and gifts, the sole guardian of your sons, to them you devoted the best years of your useful and spotless life; and any success it be their fate to attain in the paths they have severally chosen, would have its principal sweetness in the thought that such success was the reward of one whose hand aided every struggle, and whose heart sympathised in every care.

From your graceful and accomplished taste, I early learned that affection for literature which has exercised so large an influence over the pursuits of my life; and you who were my first guide, were my earliest critic. Do you remember the summer days, which seemed to me so short, when you repeated to me those old ballads with which Percy revived the decaying spirit of our national muse, or the smooth couplets of Pope, or those gentle and polished verses with the composition of which

you had beguiled your own earlier leisure? It was those easy lessons, far more than the harsher rudiments learned subsequently in schools, that taught me to admire and to imitate; and in them I recognise the germ of the flowers, however perishable they be, that I now bind up and lay upon a shrine hallowed by a thousand memories of unspeakable affection. Happy, while I borrowed from your taste, could I have found it not more difficult to imitate your virtues—your spirit of active and extended benevolence, your cheerful piety, your considerate justice, your kindly charity—and all the qualities that brighten a nature more free from the thought of self, than any it has been my lot to meet with. Never more than at this moment did I wish that my writings were possessed of a merit which might outlive my time, so that at least these lines might remain a record of the excellence of the Mother, and the gratitude of the Son.

E. L. B.

LONDON,

January 6, 1840.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION OF RIENZI.

I BEGAN this tale two years ago at Rome. On removing to Naples, I threw it aside for "The Last Days of Pompeii," which required more than "Rienzi" the advantage of residence within reach of the scenes described. The fate of the Roman Tribune continued, however, to haunt and impress me, and some time after "Pompeii" was published, I renewed my earlier undertaking. I regarded the completion of these volumes, indeed, as a kind of duty ;—for having had occasion to read the original authorities from which modern historians have drawn their accounts of the life of Rienzi, I was led to believe that a very remarkable man had been superficially judged, and a very important period crudely examined.¹ And this belief was sufficiently strong to induce me at first to meditate a more serious work upon the life and times of Rienzi.² Various reasons concurred against this project—and I renounced the biography to commence the fiction. I have still, however, adhered, with a greater fidelity than is customary in Romance, to all the leading events of the public life of the Roman Tribune ; and the reader will perhaps find in these pages a more full and detailed

¹ See Appendix, Nos. I. and II.

² I have adopted the termination of *Rienzi* instead of *Rienzo*, as being more familiar to the general reader.—But the latter is perhaps the more accurate reading, since the name was a popular corruption from Lorenzo.

account of the rise and fall of Rienzi, than in any English work of which I am aware. I have, it is true, taken a view of his character different in some respects from that of Gibbon or Sismondi. But it is a view, in all its main features, which I believe (and think I could prove) myself to be warranted in taking, not less by the facts of History than the laws of Fiction. In the meanwhile, as I have given the facts from which I have drawn my interpretation of the principal agent, the reader has sufficient data for his own judgment. In the picture of the Roman Populace, as in that of the Roman Nobles of the fourteenth century, I follow literally the descriptions left to us;—they are not flattering, but they are faithful, likenesses.

Preserving generally the real chronology of Rienzi's life, the plot of this work extends over a space of some years, and embraces the variety of characters necessary to a true delineation of events. The story, therefore, cannot have precisely that order of interest found in fictions strictly and genuinely *dramatic*, in which (to my judgment at least) the time ought to be as limited as possible, and the characters as few;—no new character of importance to the catastrophe being admissible towards the end of the work. If I may use the word Epic in its most modest and unassuming acceptation, this Fiction, in short, though indulging in dramatic situation, belongs, as a whole, rather to the Epic than the Dramatic school.

I cannot conclude without rendering the tribute of my praise and homage to the versatile and gifted Author of the beautiful Tragedy of Rienzi. Considering that our hero be the same—considering that we had the same materials from which to choose our several stories—I trust I shall be found to have little, if at all, trespassed upon ground previously occupied. With the single exception of a love-intrigue between a relative of Rienzi and one of the antagonist party, which makes the plot of Miss Mitford's Tragedy, and is little more than an episode in my

Romance, having slight effect on the conduct and none on the fate of the hero, I am not aware of any resemblance between the two works ; and even *this* coincidence I could easily have removed, had I deemed it the least advisable :—but it would be almost discreditable if I had *nothing* that resembled a performance possessing so much it were an honour to imitate.

In fact, the prodigal materials of the story—the rich and exuberant complexities of Rienzi's character—joined to the advantage possessed by the Novelist of embracing all that the Dramatist must reject¹—are sufficient to prevent Dramatist and Novelist from interfering with each other.

¹ Thus the slender space permitted to the Dramatist does not *allow* Miss Mitford to be very faithful to facts ; to distinguish between Rienzi's earlier and his later period of power ; or to detail the true, but somewhat intricate causes of his **rise, his splendour, and his fall**.

LONDON,

December 1, 1835.



PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1848.

FROM the time of its first appearance, "RIENZI" has had the good fortune to rank high amongst my most popular works—though its interest is rather drawn from a faithful narration of historical facts, than from the inventions of fancy. And the success of this experiment confirms me in my belief, that the true mode of employing history in the service of romance is to study diligently the materials *as* history; conform to such views of the facts as the Author would adopt, if he related them in the dry character of historian; and obtain that warmer interest which fiction bestows, by tracing the causes of the facts in the characters and emotions of the personages of the time. The events of his work are thus already shaped to his hand—the characters already created—what remains for him, is the inner, not outer, history of man—the chronicle of the human heart; and it is by this that he introduces a new harmony between character and event, and adds the completer solution of what is actual and true, by those speculations of what is natural and probable, which are out of the province of history, but belong especially to the philosophy of romance. And—if it be permitted the tale-teller to come reverently for instruction in his art to the mightiest teacher of all, who, whether in the page or on the scene, would give to airy fancies the breath and the form

of life,—such, we may observe, is the lesson the humblest craftsman in historical romance may glean from the Historical Plays of Shakespeare. Necessarily, Shakespeare consulted history according to the imperfect lights, and from the popular authorities of his age; and I do not say, therefore, that as an historian we can rely upon Shakespeare as correct. But to that in which he believed he rigidly adhered; nor did he seek, as lesser artists (such as Victor Hugo and his disciples) seek now, to turn perforce the Historical into the Poetical, but leaving history as he found it, to call forth from its arid prose the flower of the latent poem. Nay, even in the more imaginative plays which he has founded upon novels and legends popular in his time, it is curious and instructive to see how little he has altered the original ground-work—taking for granted the main materials of the story, and reserving all his matchless resources of wisdom and invention, to illustrate from mental analysis the creations whose outline he was content to borrow. He receives, as a literal fact not to be altered, the somewhat incredible assertion of the novelist, that the pure and delicate and high-born Venetian loves the swarthy Moor—and that Romeo fresh from his “woes for Rosaline,” becomes suddenly enamoured of Juliet: he found the Improbable, and employed his art to make it truthful.

That “RIENZI” should have attracted peculiar attention in Italy, is of course to be attributed to the choice of the subject rather than to the skill of the Author. It has been translated into the Italian language by eminent writers; and the authorities for the new view of Rienzi’s times and character which the Author deemed himself warranted to take, have been compared with his text by careful critics and illustrious scholars, in those states in which the work has been permitted to circulate.¹ I may say, I trust without unworthy pride, that the result has

¹ In the Papal States, I believe, it was, neither prudently nor effectually, proscribed.

confirmed the accuracy of delineations which English readers, relying only on the brilliant but disparaging account in Gibbon, deemed too favourable; and has tended to restore the great Tribune to his long-forgotten claims to the love and reverence of the Italian land. Nor, if I may trust to the assurances that have reached me from many now engaged in the aim of political regeneration, has the effect of that revival of the honours due to a national hero, leading to the ennobling study of great examples, been wholly without its influence upon the rising generation of Italian youth, and thereby upon those stirring events which have recently drawn the eyes of Europe to the men and the lands beyond the Alps.

In preparing for the Press this edition of a work illustrative of the exertions of a Roman, in advance of his time, for the political freedom of his country, and of those struggles between contending principles, of which Italy was the most stirring field in the Middle Ages, it is not out of place or season to add a few sober words, whether as a student of the Italian past, or as an observer with some experience of the social elements of Italy as it now exists, upon the state of affairs in that country.

It is nothing new to see the Papal Church in the capacity of a popular reformer, and in contra-position to the despotic potentates of the several States, as well as to the German Emperor, who nominally inherits the sceptre of the Cæsars. Such was its common character under its more illustrious Pontiffs; and the old Republics of Italy grew up under the shadow of the Papal throne, harbouring ever two factions—the one for the Emperor, the other for the Pope—the latter the more naturally allied to Italian independence. On the modern stage, we almost see the repetition of many an ancient drama. But the past should teach us to doubt the continuous and steadfast progress of any single line of policy under a principality so constituted as that of the Papal Church—a principality in which

no race can be perpetuated, in which no objects can be permanent; in which the successor is chosen by a select ecclesiastical synod, under a variety of foreign as well as of national influences: in which the chief usually ascends the throne at an age that ill adapts his mind to the idea of human progress, and the active direction of mundane affairs;—a principality in which the peculiar sanctity that wraps the person of the Sovereign exonerates him from the healthful liabilities of a power purely temporal, and directly accountable to Man. A reforming Pope is a lucky accident, and dull indeed must be the brain which believes in the possibility of a long succession of reforming Popes, or which can regard as other than precarious and unstable the discordant combination of a constitutional government with an infallible head.

It is as true as it is trite that political freedom is not the growth of a day—it is not a flower without a stalk, and it must gradually develop itself amidst the unfolding leaves of kindred institutions.

In one respect, the Austrian domination, fairly considered, has been beneficial to the States over which it has been directly exercised, and may be even said to have unconsciously schooled them to the capacity for freedom. In those States the personal rights which depend on impartial and incorrupt administration of the law, are infinitely more secure than in most of the Courts of Italy. Bribery, which shamefully predominates in the judicature of certain Principalities, is as unknown in the juridical courts of Austrian Italy as in England. The Emperor himself is often involved in legal disputes with a subject, and justice is as free and as firm for the humblest suitor, as if his antagonist were his equal. Austria, indeed, but holds together the motley and inharmonious members of its vast domain on either side the Alps, by a general character of paternal mildness and forbearance in all that great circle of good government which lies without

the one principle of constitutional liberty. It asks but of its subjects to submit to be well governed—without agitating the question “how and by what means that government is carried on.” For every man except the politician, the innovator, Austria is no harsh stepmother. But it is obviously clear that the better in other respects the administration of a state, it does but foster the more the desire for that political security, which is only found in constitutional freedom: the reverence paid to personal rights but begets the passion for political; and under a mild despotism are already half matured the germs of a popular constitution. But it is still a grave question whether Italy is ripe for self-government—and whether, were it possible that the Austrian domination could be shaken off—the very passions so excited, the very bloodshed so poured forth, would not ultimately place the larger portion of Italy under auspices less favourable to the sure growth of freedom, than those which silently brighten under the sway of the German Cæsar.

The two kingdoms, at the opposite extremes of Italy, to which circumstance and nature seem to assign the main ascendancy, are Naples and Sardinia. Looking to the former, it is impossible to discover on the face of the earth a country more adapted for commercial prosperity. Nature formed it as the garden of Europe and the mart of the Mediterranean. Its soil and climate could unite the products of the East with those of the Western hemisphere. The rich island of Sicily should be the great corn granary of the modern nations as it was of the ancient; the figs, the olives, the oranges of both the Sicilies, under skilful cultivation, should equal the produce of Spain and the Orient; and the harbours of the kingdom (the keys to three-quarters of the globe) should be crowded with the sails and busy with the life of commerce. But, in the character of its population, Naples has been invariably in the rear of Italian progress; it caught but partial inspiration from the free

Republics, or even the wise Tyrannies, of the Middle Ages; the theatre of frequent revolutions without fruit; and all rational enthusiasm created by that insurrection, which has lately bestowed on Naples the boon of a representative system, cannot **but** be tempered by the conviction that of all the States in Italy, this is the one which least warrants the belief of permanence to political freedom, or of capacity to retain with vigour what may be seized by passion.¹

Far otherwise is it with Sardinia. Many years since, the writer of these pages ventured to predict that the time must come when Sardinia would lead the van of Italian civilisation, and take proud place amongst the greater nations of Europe. In the great portion of this population there is visible the new blood of a young race; it is not, as with other Italian states, a worn-out stock; you do not see there a people fallen, proud of the past, and lazy amidst ruins, but a people rising, practical, industrious, active; there, in a word, is an eager youth to be formed to mature development, not a decrepit age to be restored to bloom and muscle. Progress is the great characteristic of the Sardinian state. Leave it for five years; visit it again, and you behold improvement. When you enter the kingdom and find, by the very skirts of its admirable roads, a raised footpath for the passengers and travellers from town to town, you become suddenly aware that you are in a land where close attention to

¹ If the Electoral Chamber in the new Neapolitan Constitution give a fair share of members to the Island of Sicily, it will be rich in the inevitable elements of discord, and nothing save a wisdom and moderation, which cannot soberly be anticipated, can prevent the ultimate separation of the island from the dominion of Naples. Nature has set the ocean between the two countries—but differences in character, and degree and quality of civilisation—national jealousies, historical memories, have trebled the space of the seas that roll between them.—More easy to unite under one free Parliament, Spain with Flanders; or re-annex to England its old domains of Aquitaine and Normandy—than to unite in one Council Chamber *truly* popular, the passions, interests, and prejudices of Sicily and Naples.—Time will show. And now, in May, 1849, Time has already shown the impracticability of the first scheme proposed for cordial union between Naples and Sicily, and has rendered it utterly impossible, by mutual recollections of hatred, bequeathed by a civil war of singular barbarism, that Naples should permanently retain Sicily by any other hold than the brute force of conquest.

the humbler classes is within the duties of a government. As you pass on from the more purely Italian part of the population,—from the Genoese country into that of Piedmont,—the difference between a new people and an old, on which I have dwelt, becomes visible in the improved cultivation of the soil, the better habitations of the labourer, the neater aspect of the towns, the greater activity in the thoroughfares. To the extraordinary virtues of the King, as King, justice is scarcely done, whether in England or abroad. Certainly, despite his recent concessions, Charles Albert is not and cannot be at heart, much of a constitutional reformer; and his strong religious tendencies, which, perhaps unjustly, have procured him in philosophical quarters the character of a bigot, may link him more than his political, with the cause of the Father of his Church. But he is nobly and pre-eminently national, careful of the prosperity and jealous of the honour of his own state, while conscientiously desirous of the independence of Italy. His attention to business is indefatigable. Nothing escapes his vigilance. Over all departments of the kingdom is the eye of a man ever anxious to improve. Already the silk manufactures of Sardinia almost rival those of Lyons: in their own departments the tradesmen of Turin exhibit an artistic elegance and elaborate finish, scarcely exceeded in the wares of London and Paris. The King's internal regulations are admirable; his laws, administered with the most impartial justice—his forts and defences are in that order, without which, at least on the Continent, no land is safe—his army is the most perfect in Italy. His wise genius extends itself to the elegant as to the useful arts—an encouragement that shames England, and even France, is bestowed upon the School for Painters, which has become one of the ornaments of his illustrious reign. The character of the main part of the population, and the geographical position of his country, assist the monarch and must force on himself, or his successors, in the career of improvement

so signally begun. In the character of the people, the vigour of the Northman ennobles the ardour and fancy of the West. In the position of the country, the public mind is brought into constant communication with the new ideas in the free lands of Europe. Civilisation sets in direct currents towards the streets and marts of Turin. Whatever the result of the present crisis in Italy, no power and no chance which statesmen can predict, can preclude Sardinia from ultimately heading all that is best in Italy. The King may improve his present position, or peculiar prejudices, inseparable perhaps from the heritage of absolute monarchy, and which the raw and rude councils of an Electoral Chamber, newly called into life, must often irritate and alarm may check his own progress towards the master throne of the Ausonian land. But the people themselves, sooner or later, will do the work of the King. And in now looking round Italy for a race worthy of Rienzi, and able to accomplish his proud dreams, I see but one for which the time is ripe or ripening, and I place the hopes of Italy in the men of Piedmont and Sardinia.

LONDON,

February 14, 1848.

RIENZI; THE LAST OF THE TRIBUNES.

BOOK I.

THE TIME, THE PLACE, AND THE MEN.

Fu da sua gioventudine nutricato di latte di eloquenza ; buono grammatico, migliore rettorico, autorista buono . . . Oh, come spesso diceva, “Dove sono questi buoni Romani? Dov'è loro somma giustizia? Poterommi trovare in tempo che questi fioriscano?” Era bell'omo . . . Accadde che uno suo frate fu ucciso e non ne fu fatta vendetta di sua morte ; non lo poteò aiutare ; pensa lungo mano vendicare 'l sangue di suo frate ; pensa lunga mano dirizzare la cittate di Roma male guidata.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi.* Ed. 1828. Forli.

From his youth he was nourished with the milk of eloquence ; a good grammarian, a better rhetorician, well versed in the writings of authors . . . Oh, how often would he say, ‘Where are those good Romans? Where is their supreme justice? Shall I ever behold such times as those in which they flourished?’ He was a handsome man . . . It happened that a brother of his was slain, and no retribution was made for his death : he could not help him ; long did he ponder how to avenge his brother's blood ; long did he ponder how to direct the misguided state of Rome.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi.*

CHAPTER I.

THE BROTHERS.

THE celebrated name which forms the title to this work will sufficiently apprise the reader that it is in the earlier half of the fourteenth century that my story opens.

It was on a summer evening that two youths might be seen walking beside the banks of the Tiber, not far from that part of its winding course which sweeps by the base of Mount Aventine.

The path they had selected was remote and tranquil. It was only at a distance that were seen the scattered and squalid houses that bordered the river, from amidst which rose, dark and frequent, the high roof and enormous towers which marked the fortified mansion of some Roman baron. On one side of the river, behind the cottages of the fishermen, soared Mount Janiculum, dark with massive foliage, from which gleamed at frequent intervals, the gray walls of many a castellated palace, and the spires and columns of a hundred churches; on the other side, the deserted Aventine rose abrupt and steep, covered with thick brushwood; while, on the height, from concealed but numerous convents, rolled, not unmusically, along the quiet landscape and the rippling waves, the sound of the noly bell.

Of the young men introduced in this scene, the elder, who might have somewhat passed his twentieth year, was of a tall and even commanding stature; and there was that in his presence remarkable and almost noble, despite the homeliness of his garb, which consisted of the long, loose gown and the plain tunic, both of dark-gray serge, which distinguished, at that time, the dress of the humbler scholars who frequented the monasteries for such rude knowledge as then yielded a scanty return for intense toil. His countenance was handsome, and would have been rather gay than thoughtful in its expression, but for that vague and abstracted dreaminess of eye which so usually denotes a propensity to reverie and contemplation, and betrays that the past or the future is more congenial to the mind than the enjoyment and action of the present hour.

The younger, who was yet a boy, had nothing striking in his appearance or countenance, unless an expression of great sweetness and gentleness could be so called; and there was something almost feminine in the tender deference with which he appeared to listen to his companion. His dress was that usually worn by the humbler classes, though somewhat neater, perhaps, and newer; and the fond vanity of a mother might be detected in the care with which the long and silky ringlets had been smoothed and parted as they escaped from his cap and flowed midway down his shoulders.

As they thus sauntered on beside the whispering reeds of the

river, each with his arm round the form of his comrade, there was a grace in the bearing, in the youth, and in the evident affection of the brothers—for such their connection—which elevated the lowliness of their apparent condition.

“Dear brother,” said the elder, “I cannot express to thee how I enjoy these evening hours. To you alone I feel as if I were not a mere visionary and idler when I talk of the uncertain future, and build up my palaces of the air. Our parents listen to me as if I were uttering fine things out of a book; and my dear mother, Heaven bless her! wipes her eyes, and says, ‘Hark, what a scholar he is!’ As for the monks, if I ever dare look from my Livy, and cry, ‘Thus should Rome be again!’ they stare, and gape, and frown, as though I had broached an heresy. But you, sweet brother, though you share not my studies, sympathise so kindly with all their results—you seem so to approve my wild schemes, and to encourage my ambitious hopes—that sometimes I forget our birth, our fortunes, and think and dare as if no blood save that of the Teuton Emperor flowed through our veins.”

“Methinks, dear Cola,” said the younger brother, “that Nature played us an unfair trick—to you she transmitted the royal soul, derived from our father’s parentage; and to me only the quiet and lowly spirit of my mother’s humble lineage.”

“Nay,” answered Cola, quickly, “you would then have the brighter share,—for I should have but the Barbarian origin, and you the Roman. Time was, when to be a simple Roman was to be nobler than a northern king.—Well, well, we may live to see great changes!”

“I shall live to see thee a great man, and that will content me,” said the younger, smiling affectionately: “a great scholar all confess you to be already: our mother predicts your fortunes every time she hears of your welcome visits to the Colonna.”

“The Colonna!” said Cola, with a bitter smile; “the Colonna—the pedants!—They affect, dull souls, the knowledge of the past, play the patron, and misquote Latin over their cups! They are pleased to welcome me at their board, because the Roman doctors call me learned, and because Nature gave me a wild wit, which to them is pleasanter than the stale jests of

a hired buffoon. Yes, they would advance my fortunes—but how? by some place in the public offices, which would fill a dishonoured coffer, by wringing, yet more sternly, the hard earned coins from our famishing citizens! If there be a vile thing in the world, it is a plebeian, advanced by patricians, not for the purpose of righting his own order, but for playing the pander to the worst interests of theirs. He who is of the people but makes himself a traitor to his birth, if he furnishes the excuse for these tyrant hypocrites to lift up their hands and cry—‘See what liberty exists in Rome, when *we*, the patricians, thus elevate a plebeian!’ Did they ever elevate a plebeian if he sympathised with plebeians? No, brother; should I be lifted above our condition, I will be raised by the arms of my countrymen, and not upon their necks.”

“All I hope is, Cola, that you will not, in your zeal for your fellow-citizens, forget how dear you are to us. No greatness could ever reconcile me to the thought that it brought you danger.”

“And *I* could laugh at all danger, if it led to greatness. But greatness—greatness! Vain dream! Let us keep it for our *night* sleep. Enough of *my* plans; now, dearest brother, of yours.”

And, with the sanguine and cheerful elasticity which belonged to him, the young Cola, dismissing all wilder thoughts, bent his mind to listen, and to enter into, the humbler projects of his brother. The new boat and the holiday dress, and the cot removed to a quarter more secure from the oppression of the barons, and such distant pictures of love as a dark eye and a merry lip conjure up to the vague sentiments of a boy;—to schemes and aspirations of which such objects made the limit, did the scholar listen, with a relaxed brow and a tender smile; and often, in later life, did that conversation occur to him, when he shrank from asking his own heart which ambition was the wiser.

“And then,” continued the younger brother, “by degrees I might save enough to purchase such a vessel as that which we now see, laden, doubtless, with corn and merchandise, bringing—oh, such a good return—that I could fill your room with

books, and never hear you complain that you were not rich enough to purchase some crumbling old monkish manuscript. Ah, that would make me so happy!" Cola smiled as he pressed his brother closer to his breast.

"Dear boy," said he, "may it rather be mine to provide for your wishes! Yet methinks the masters of yon vessel have no enviable possession; see how anxiously the men look round, and behind, and before: peaceful traders though they be, they fear, it seems, even in this city (once the emporium of the civilised world), some pirate in pursuit; and ere the voyage be over, they may find that pirate in a Roman noble. Alas, to what are we reduced!"

The vessel thus referred to was speeding rapidly down the river, and some three or four armed men on deck were indeed intently surveying the quiet banks on either side, as if anticipating a foe. The bark soon, however, glided out of sight, and the brothers fell back upon those themes which require only the future for a text to become attractive to the young.

At length, as the evening darkened, they remembered that it was past the usual hour in which they returned home, and they began to retrace their steps.

"Stay," said Cola, abruptly, "how our talk has beguiled me! Father Uberto promised me a rare manuscript, which the good friar confesses hath puzzled the whole convent. I was to seek his cell for it this evening. Tarry here a few minutes, it is but half-way up the Aventine. I shall soon return."

"Can I not accompany you?"

"Nay," returned Cola, with considerate kindness, "you have borne toil all the day, and must be wearied; my labours, of the body, at least, have been light enough. You are delicate, too, and seem fatigued already; the rest will refresh you. I shall not be long."

The boy acquiesced, though he rather wished to accompany his brother; but he was of a meek and yielding temper, and seldom resisted the lightest command of those he loved. He sat him down on a little bank by the river-side, and the firm step and towering form of his brother were soon hid from his gaze by the thick and melancholy foliage.

At first he sat very quietly, enjoying the cool air, and thinking over all the stories of ancient Rome that his brother had told him in their walk. At length he recollected that his little sister, Irene, had begged him to bring her home some flowers; and gathering such as he could find at hand (and many a flower grew, wild and clustering, over that desolate spot), he again seated himself, and began weaving them into one of those garlands for which the southern peasantry still retain their ancient affection, and something of their classic skill.

While the boy was thus engaged, the tramp of horses and the loud shouting of men were heard at a distance. They came near, and nearer.

"Some baron's procession, perhaps, returning from a feast," thought the boy. "It will be a pretty sight—their white plumes and scarlet mantles! I love to see such sights, but I will just move out of their way."

So, still mechanically platting his garland, but with eyes turned towards the quarter of the expected procession, the young Roman moved yet nearer towards the river.

Presently the train came in view,—a gallant company, in truth; horsemen in front, riding two abreast, where the path permitted, their steeds caparisoned superbly, their plumes waving gaily, and the gleam of their corselets glittering through the shades of the dusky twilight. A large and miscellaneous crowd, all armed, some with pikes and mail, others with less warlike or worse fashioned weapons, followed the cavaliers; and high above plume and pike floated the blood-red banner of the Orsini, with the motto and device (in which was ostentatiously displayed the Guelfic badge of the keys of St. Peter) wrought in burnished gold. A momentary fear crossed the boy's mind, for at that time, and in that city, a nobleman begirt with his swordsmen was more dreaded than a wild beast by the plebeians; but it was already too late to fly—the train were upon him.

"Ho, boy!" cried the leader of the horsemen, Martino di Porto, one of the great House of the Orsini; "hast thou seen a boat pass up the river?—But thou must have seen it—how long since?"

"I saw a large boat about half an hour ago," answered the boy, terrified by the rough voice and imperious bearing of the cavalier.

"Sailing right a-head, with a green flag at the stern?"

"The same, noble sir."

"On, then! we will stop her course ere the moon rise," said the baron. "On!—let the boy go with us, lest he prove traitor, and alarm the Colonna."

"An Orsini, an Orsini!" shouted the multitude; "on, on!" and, despite the prayers and remonstrances of the boy, he was placed in the thickest of the crowd, and borne, or rather dragged along with the rest—frightened, breathless, almost weeping, with his poor little garland still hanging on his arm, while a sling was thrust into his unwilling hand. Still he felt, through all his alarm, a kind of childish curiosity to see the result of the pursuit.

By the loud and eager conversation of those about him, he learned that the vessel he had seen contained a supply of corn destined to a fortress up the river held by the Colonna, then at deadly feud with the Orsini; and it was the object of the expedition in which the boy had been thus lucklessly entrained to intercept the provision, and divert it to the garrison of Martino di Porto. This news somewhat increased his consternation, for the boy belonged to a family that claimed the patronage of the Colonna.

Anxiously and tearfully he looked with every moment up the steep ascent of the Aventine; but his guardian, his protector, still delayed his appearance.

They had now proceeded some way, when a winding in the road brought suddenly before them the object of their pursuit, as, seen by the light of the earliest stars, it scudded rapidly down the stream.

"Now, the Saints be blest!" quoth the chief; "she is ours!"

"Hold!" said a captain (a German) riding next to Martino, in a half whisper; "I hear sounds which I like not, by yonder trees—hark! the neigh of a horse!—by my faith, too, there is the gleam of a corselet!"

"Push on, my masters," cried Martino; "the heron shall not balk the eagle—push on!"

With renewed shouts, those on foot pushed forward, till, as they had nearly gained the copse referred to by the German, a small compact body of horsemen, armed *cap-à-pié*, dashed from amidst the trees, and, with spears in their rests, charged into the ranks of the pursuers.

"A Colonna! a Colonna!" "An Orsini! an Orsini!" were shouts loudly and fiercely interchanged. Martino di Porto, a man of great bulk and ferocity, and his cavaliers, who were chiefly German mercenaries, met the encounter unshaken. "Beware the bear's hug," cried the Orsini, as down went his antagonist, rider and steed, before his lance.

The contest was short and fierce; the complete armour of the horsemen protected them on either side from wounds—not so unscathed fared the half-armed foot-followers of the Orsini, as they pressed, each pushed on by the other, against the Colonna. After a shower of stones and darts, which fell but as hailstones against the thick mail of the horsemen, they closed in, and, by their number, obstructed the movements of the steeds, while the spear, sword, and battle-axe of their opponents made ruthless havoc amongst their undisciplined ranks. And Martino, who cared little how many of his mere mob were butchered, seeing that his foes were for the moment embarrassed by the wild rush and gathering circle of his foot train (for the place of conflict, though wider than the previous road, was confined and narrow), made a sign to some of his horsemen, and was about to ride forward towards the boat, now nearly out of sight, when a bugle at some distance was answered by one of his enemy at hand; and the shout of "Colonna to the rescue!" was echoed afar off. A few moments brought in view a numerous train of horse at full speed, with the banners of the Colonna waving gallantly in the front.

"A plague on the wizards! who would have imagined they had divined us so craftily!" muttered Martino; "we must not abide these odds;" and the hand he had first raised for advance now gave the signal of retreat.

Serried breast to breast and in complete order, the horsemen

of Martino turned to fly ; the foot rabble who had come for spoil remained but for slaughter. They endeavoured to imitate their leaders ; but how could they all elude the rushing chargers and sharp lances of their antagonists, whose blood was heated by the affray, and who regarded the lives at their mercy as a boy regards the wasp's nest he destroys. The crowd dispersing in all directions—some, indeed, escaped up the hills, where the footing was impracticable to the horses ; some plunged into the river and swam across to the opposite bank—those less cool or experienced, who fled right onwards, served, by clogging the way of their enemy, to facilitate the flight of their leaders, but fell themselves, corpse upon corpse, butchered in the unrelenting and unresisted pursuit.

“No quarter to the ruffians!—every Orsini slain is a robber the less!—strike for God, the Emperor, and the Colonna!” such were the shouts which rung the knell of the dismayed and falling fugitives. Among those who fled onward, in the very path most accessible to the cavalry, was the young brother of Cola, so innocently mixed with the affray. Fast he fled, dizzy with terror—poor boy, scarce before ever parted from his parents' or his brother's side!—the trees glided past him—the banks receded :—on he sped, and fast behind came the tramp of the hoofs—the shouts—the curses—the fierce laughter of the foe, as they bounded over the dead and the dying in their path. He was now at the spot in which his brother had left him ; hastily he glanced behind, and saw the couched lance and horrent crest of the horseman close at his rear ; despairingly he looked up, and, behold ! his brother bursting through the tangled brakes that clothed the mountain, and bounding to his succour.

“Save me ! save me, brother !” he shrieked aloud, and the shriek reached Cola's ear ;—the snort of the fiery charger breathed hot upon him ;—a moment more, and with one wild shrill cry of “Mercy, mercy !” he fell to the ground—a corpse : the lance of the pursuer passing through and through him, from back to breast, and nailing him on the very sod where he had sate, full of young life and careless hope, not an hour ago.

The horseman plucked forth his spear, and passed on in pursuit of new victims, his comrades following. Cola had descended

—was on the spot—kneeling by his murdered brother. Presently, to the sound of horn and trumpet, came by a nobler company than most of those hitherto engaged; who had been, indeed, but the advanced-guard of the Colonna. At their head rode a man in years, whose long white hair escaped from his plumed cap and mingled with his venerable beard. “How is this?” said the chief, reining in his steed; “young Rienzi!”

The youth looked up, as he heard that voice, and then flung himself before the steed of the old noble, and, clasping his hands, cried out in a scarce articulate tone: “It is my brother, noble Stephen: a boy, a mere child!—the best—the mildest! See how his blood dabbles the grass!—back, back—your horse’s hoofs are in the stream! Justice, my Lord; justice! You are a great man.”

“Who slew him? an Orsini, doubtless; you shall have justice.”

“Thanks, thanks,” murmured Rienzi, as he tottered once more to his brother’s side, turned the boy’s face from the grass, and strove wildly to feel the pulse of his heart; he drew back his hand hastily, for it was crimsoned with blood, and lifting that hand on high, shrieked out again, “Justice! justice!”

The group round the old Stephen Colonna, hardened as they were in such scenes, were affected by the sight. A handsome boy, whose tears ran fast down his cheeks, and who rode his palfrey close by the side of the Colonna, drew forth his sword. “My Lord,” said he, half sobbing, “an Orsini only could have butchered a harmless lad like this; let us lose not a moment,—let us on after the ruffians.”

“No, Adrian, no!” cried Stephen, laying his hand on the boy’s shoulder; “your zeal is to be lauded; but we must beware an ambush. Our men have ventured too far—what ho, there!—sound a return.”

The bugles, in a few minutes, brought back the pursuers—among them, the horseman whose spear had been so fatally misused. He was the leader of those engaged in the conflict with Martino di Porto; and the gold wrought into his armour, with the gorgeous trappings of his charger, betokened his rank.

“Thanks, my son, thanks,” said the old Colonna to this

cavalier; "you have done well and bravely. But tell me, knowest thou—for thou hast an eagle eye—which of the Orsini slew this poor boy?—a foul deed; his family, too, our clients!"

"Who? yon lad?" replied the horseman, lifting the helmet from his head, and wiping his heated brow; "say you so? how came he, then, with Martino's rascals? I fear me the mistake hath cost him dear. I could but suppose him of the Orsini rabble, and so—and so——"

"*You* slew him!" cried Rienzi, in a voice of thunder, starting from the ground. "Justice! then, my Lord Stephen, justice! you promised me justice, and I will have it!"

"My poor youth," said the old man, compassionately; "you should have had justice against the Orsini; but see you not this has been an error? I do not wonder you are too grieved to listen to reason now. We must make this up to you."

"And let this pay for masses for the boy's soul; I grieve me much for the accident," said the younger Colonna, flinging down a purse of gold. "Ay, see us at the palace next week, young Cola—next week. My father, we had best return towards the boat; its safeguard may require us yet."

"Right, Gianni; stay, some two of you, and see to the poor lad's corpse; a grievous accident!—how could it chance?"

The company passed back the way they came, two of the common soldiers alone remaining, except the boy Adrian, who lingered behind a few moments, striving to console Rienzi, who, as one bereft of sense, remained motionless, gazing on the proud array as it swept along, and muttering to himself, "Justice, justice! I will have it yet."

The loud voice of the elder Colonna summoned Adrian, reluctantly and weeping, away. "Let me be your brother," said the gallant boy, affectionately pressing the scholar's hand to his heart; "I want a brother like you."

Rienzi made no reply; he did not heed or hear him—dark and stern thoughts, thoughts in which were the germ of a mighty revolution, were at his heart. He woke from them with a start, as the soldiers were now arranging their bucklers so as to make a kind of bier for the corpse, and then burst into tears

as he fiercely motioned them away, and clasped the clay to his breast till he was literally soaked with the oozing blood.

The poor child's garland had not dropped from his arm even when he fell, and, entangled by his dress, it still clung around him. It was a sight that recalled to Cola all the gentleness, the kind heart, and winning graces of his only brother—his only friend! It was a sight that seemed to make yet more inhuman the untimely and unmerited fate of that innocent boy. "My brother! my brother!" groaned the survivor; "how shall I meet our mother?—how shall I meet even night and solitude again?—so young—so harmless! See ye, sirs, he was but too gentle. And they will not give us justice, because his murderer was a noble and a Colonna. And this gold, too—gold for a brother's blood! Will they not"—and the young man's eyes glared like fire—"will they not give us justice? Time shall show!" So saying, he bent his head over the corpse; his lips muttered, as with some prayer or invocation; and then rising, his face was as pale as the dead beside him,—but it was no longer pale with *grief*!

From that bloody clay, and that inward prayer, Cola di Rienzi rose a new being. With his young brother died his own youth. But for that event, the future liberator of Rome might have been but a dreamer, a scholar, a poet; the peaceful rival of Petrarch; a man of thoughts, not deeds. But from that time, all his faculties, energies, fancies, genius, became concentrated into a single point; and patriotism, before a vision, leapt into the life and vigour of a passion, lastingly kindled, stubbornly hardened, and awfully consecrated,—by revenge!

CHAPTER II.

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY—NOT TO BE PASSED OVER, EXCEPT BY THOSE WHO DISLIKE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY READ.

YEARS had passed away, and the death of the Roman boy, amidst more noble and less excusable slaughter, was soon forgotten,—forgotten almost by the parents of the slain, in the

growing fame and fortunes of their eldest son,—forgotten and forgiven never by that son himself. But, between that prologue of blood and the political drama which ensues,—between the fading interest, as it were, of a dream, and the more busy, actual, and continuous excitements of sterner life,—this may be the most fitting time to place before the reader a short and rapid outline of the state and circumstances of that city in which the principal scenes of this story are laid ;—an outline necessary, perhaps, to many, for a full comprehension of the motives of the actors and the vicissitudes of the plot.

Despite the miscellaneous and mongrel tribes that had forced their settlements in the City of the Cæsars, the Roman population retained an inordinate notion of their own supremacy over the rest of the world ; and, degenerated from the iron virtues of the Republic, possessed all the insolent and unruly turbulence which characterised the *Plebs* of the ancient Forum. Amongst a ferocious, yet not a brave populace, the nobles supported themselves less as sagacious tyrants than as relentless banditti. The popes had struggled in vain against these stubborn and stern patricians. Their state derided, their command defied, their persons publicly outraged, the pontiff-sovereigns of the rest of Europe resided at the Vatican as prisoners under terror of execution. When, thirty-eight years before the date of the events we are about to witness, a Frenchman, under the name of Clement V., had ascended the chair of St. Peter, the new pope, with more prudence than valour, had deserted Rome for the tranquil retreat of Avignon ; and the luxurious town of a foreign province became the court of the Roman pontiff, and the throne of the Christian Church.

Thus deprived of even the nominal check of the papal presence, the power of the nobles might be said to have no limits, save their own caprice, or their mutual jealousies and feuds. Though arrogating through fabulous genealogies their descent from the ancient Romans, they were, in reality, for the most part, the sons of the bolder barbarians of the North ; and, contaminated by the craft of Italy, rather than imbued with its national affections, they retained the disdain of their foreign ancestors for a conquered soil and a degenerate people. While the rest of Italy,

especially in Florence, in Venice, and in Milan, was fast and far advancing beyond the other states of Europe in civilisation and in art, the Romans appeared rather to recede than to improve;—unblest by laws, unvisited by art, strangers at once to the chivalry of a warlike, and the graces of a peaceful people. But they still possessed the sense and desire of liberty, and, by ferocious paroxysms and desperate struggles, sought to vindicate for their city the title it still assumed of “the Metropolis of the World.” For the last two centuries they had known various revolutions,—brief, often bloody, and always unsuccessful. Still, there was the empty pageant of a popular form of government. The thirteen quarters of the city named each a chief; and the assembly of these magistrates, called *Caporioni*, by theory possessed an authority they had neither the power nor the courage to exert. Still there was the proud name of Senator; but, at the present time, the office was confined to one or to two persons, sometimes elected by the pope, sometimes by the nobles. The authority attached to the name seems to have had no definite limit; it was that of a stern dictator, or an indolent puppet, according as he who held it had the power to enforce the dignity he assumed. It was never conceded but to nobles, and it was by the nobles that all the outrages were committed. Private enmity alone was gratified whenever public justice was invoked: and the vindication of order was but the execution of revenge.

Holding their palaces as the castles and fortresses of princes, each asserting his own independency of all authority and law, and planting fortifications, and claiming principalities in the patrimonial territories of the Church, the barons of Rome made their state still more secure, and still more odious, by the maintenance of troops of foreign (chiefly of German) mercenaries, at once braver in disposition, more disciplined in service, and more skilful in arms, than even the freest Italians of that time. Thus they united the judicial and the military force, not for the protection, but for the ruin of Rome. Of these barons, the most powerful were the Orsini and Colonna; their feuds were hereditary and incessant, and every day witnessed the fruits of their lawless warfare, in bloodshed, in rape, and in conflagration. The flattery or the friendship of Petrarch, too credulously believed

by modern historians, has invested the Colonna, especially of the date now entered upon, with an elegance and a dignity not their own. Outrage, fraud, and assassination, a sordid avarice in securing lucrative offices to themselves, an insolent oppression of their citizens, and the most dastardly cringing to power superior to their own (with but few exceptions), mark the character of the first family of Rome. But, wealthier than the rest of the barons, they were, therefore, more luxurious, and, perhaps, more intellectual; and their pride was flattered in being patrons of those arts of which they could never have become the professors. From these multiplied oppressors the Roman citizens turned with fond and impatient regret to their ignorant and dark notions of departed liberty and greatness. They confounded the times of the Empire with those of the Republic: and often looked to the Teutonic king, who obtained his election from beyond the Alps, but his *title* of emperor from the Romans, as the deserter of his legitimate trust and proper home; vainly imagining that, if both the Emperor and the Pontiff fixed their residence in Rome, Liberty and Law would again seek their natural shelter beneath the resuscitated majesty of the Roman people.

The absence of the pope and the papal court served greatly to impoverish the citizens; and they had suffered yet more visibly by the depredations of hordes of robbers, numerous and unsparing, who infested Romagna, obstructing all the public ways, and were, sometimes secretly, sometimes openly, protected by the barons, who often recruited their banditti garrisons by banditti soldiers.

But besides the lesser and ignobler robbers, there had risen in Italy a far more formidable description of freebooters. A German, who assumed the lofty title of the Duke Werner, had, a few years prior to the period we approach, enlisted and organised a considerable force, styled "The Great Company," with which he besieged cities and invaded states, without any object less shameless than that of pillage. His example was soon imitated: numerous "Companies," similarly constituted, devastated the distracted and divided land. They appeared, suddenly raised, as if by magic, before the walls of a city, and demanded immense sums as the purchase of peace. Neither tyrant nor

commonwealth maintained a force sufficient to resist them ; and if other northern mercenaries were engaged to oppose them, it was only to recruit the standards of the freebooters with deserters. Mercenary fought not mercenary—nor German, German: and greater pay, and more unbridled rapine, made the tents of the “Companies” far more attractive than the regulated stipends of a city, or the dull fortress and impoverished coffers of a chief. Werner, the most implacable and ferocious of all these adventurers, and who had so openly gloried in his enormities as to wear upon his breast a silver plate, engraved with the words, “Enemy to God, to Pity, and to Mercy,” had not long since ravaged Romagna with fire and sword. But, whether induced by money, or unable to control the fierce spirits he had raised, he afterwards led the bulk of his company back to Germany. Small detachments, however, remained, scattered throughout the land, waiting only an able leader once more to re-unite them : amongst those who appeared most fitted for that destiny was Walter de Montreal, a Knight of St. John, and gentleman of Provence, whose valour and military genius had already, though yet young, raised his name into dreaded celebrity ; and whose ambition, experience, and sagacity, relieved by certain chivalric and noble qualities, were suited to enterprises far greater and more important than the violent depredations of the atrocious Werner. From these scourges, no state had suffered more grievously than Rome. The patrimonial territories of the pope, —in part wrested from him by petty tyrants, in part laid waste by these foreign robbers,—yielded but a scanty supply to the necessities of Clement VI., the most accomplished gentleman and the most graceful voluptuary of his time ; and the good father had devised a plan, whereby to enrich at once the Romans and their pontiff.

Nearly fifty years before the time we enter upon, in order both to replenish the papal coffers and pacify the starving Romans, Boniface VIII. had instituted the Festival of the Jubilee, or Holy Year ; in fact, a revival of a Pagan ceremonial. A plenary indulgence was promised to every Catholic who, in that year, and in the first year of every succeeding century, should visit the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul. An immense concourse of

pilgrims, from every part of Christendom, had attested the wisdom of the invention: "and two priests stood night and day, with rakes in their hands, to collect without counting the heaps of gold and silver that were poured on the altar of St. Paul."¹

It is not to be wondered at that this most lucrative festival should, ere the next century was half expired, appear to a discreet pontiff to be too long postponed. And both pope and city agreed in thinking it might well bear a less distant renewal. Accordingly, Clement VI. had proclaimed, under the name of the *Mosaic Jubilee*, a second Holy Year for 1350—viz., three years distant from that date at which, in the next chapter, my narrative will commence. This circumstance had a great effect in whetting the popular indignation against the barons, and preparing the events I shall relate; for the roads were, as I before said, infested by the banditti, the creatures and allies of the barons. And if the roads were not cleared, the pilgrims might not attend. It was the object of the pope's vicar, Raimond, bishop of Orvietto (bad politician and good canonist), to seek, by every means, to remove all impediment between the offerings of devotion and the treasury of St. Peter.

Such, in brief, was the state of Rome at the period we are about to examine. Her ancient mantle of renown still, in the eyes of Italy and of Europe, cloaked her ruins. In name, at least, she was still the queen of the earth; and from her hands came the crown of the emperor of the north, and the keys of the father of the Church. Her situation was precisely that which presented a vast and glittering triumph to bold ambition,—an inspiring, if mournful, spectacle to determined patriotism,—and a fitting stage for that more august tragedy which seeks its incidents, selects its actors, and shapes its moral, amidst the vicissitudes and crimes of nations.

¹ Gibbon, vol. xii. c. 59.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRAWL.

ON an evening in April, 1347, and in one of those wide spaces in which Modern and Ancient Rome seemed blent together—equally desolate and equally in ruins—a miscellaneous and indignant populace were assembled. That morning the house of a Roman jeweller had been forcibly entered and pillaged by the soldiers of Martino di Porto, with a daring effrontery which surpassed even the ordinary licence of the barons. The sympathy and sensation throughout the city were deep and ominous.

“Never will I submit to this tyranny!”

“Nor I!”

“Nor I!”

“Nor, by the bones of St. Peter, will I!”

“And what, my friends, is this tyranny to which you will not submit?” said a young nobleman, addressing himself to the crowd of citizens who, heated, angry, half-armed, and with the vehement gestures of Italian passion, were now sweeping down the long and narrow street that led to the gloomy quarter occupied by the Orsini.

“Ah, my lord!” cried two or three of the citizens in a breath, “you will right us—you will see justice done to us—you are a Colonna.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed scornfully one man of gigantic frame, and wielding on high a huge hammer, indicative of his trade. “Justice and Colonna! body of God! those names are not often found together.”

“Down with him! down with him! he is an Orsinist,—down with him!” cried at least ten of the throng: but no hand was raised against the giant.

“He speaks the truth,” said a second voice, firmly.

“Ay, that doth he,” said a third, knitting his brows, and unsheathing his knife, “and we will abide by it. The Orsini are tyrants—and the Colonnas are, at the best, as bad.”

"Thou liest in thy teeth, ruffian!" cried the young noble, advancing into the press and confronting the last asperser of the Colonna.

Before the flashing eye and menacing gesture of the cavalier, the worthy brawler retreated some steps, so as to leave an open space between the towering form of the smith, and the small, slender, but vigorous frame of the young noble.

Taught from their birth to despise the courage of the plebeians, even while careless of much reputation as to their own, the patricians of Rome were not unaccustomed to the rude fellowship of these brawls; nor was it unoften that the mere presence of a noble sufficed to scatter whole crowds, that had the moment before been breathing vengeance against his order and his house.

Waving his hand, therefore, to the smith, and utterly unheeding either his brandished weapon or his vast stature, the young Adrian di Castello, a distant kinsman of the Colonna, haughtily bade him give way.

"To your homes, friends! and know," he added, with some dignity, "that ye wrong us much, if ye imagine we share the evil-doings of the Orsini, or are pandering solely to our own passions in the feud between their house and ours. May the Holy Mother so judge me," continued he, devoutly lifting up his eyes; "as I now with truth declare, that it is for your wrongs, and for the wrongs of Rome, that I have drawn this sword against the Orsini."

"So say all the tyrants," rejoined the smith, hardily, as he leant his hammer against a fragment of stone—some remnant of ancient Rome—"they never fight against each other, but it is for our good. One Colonna cuts me the throat of Orsini's baker—it is for our good! another Colonna seizes on the daughter of Orsini's tailor—it is for our good! *our* good—yes, for the good of the people!—the good of the bakers and tailors, eh?"

"Fellow," said the young nobleman, gravely, "if a Colonna did thus, he did wrong; but the holiest cause may have bad supporters."

"Yes, the holy Church itself is propped on very indifferent

columns," answered the smith, in a rude witticism on the affection of the pope for the Colonna.

"He blasphemes! the smith blasphemes!" cried the partisans of that powerful house. "A Colonna, a Colonna!"

"An Orsini, an Orsini!" was no less promptly the counter cry.

"THE PEOPLE!" shouted the smith, waving his formidable weapon far above the heads of the group.

In an instant the whole throng, who had at first united against the aggression of one man, were divided by the hereditary wrath of faction. At the cry of Orsini, several new partisans hurried to the spot; the friends of the Colonna drew themselves on one side—the defenders of the Orsini on the other—and the few who agreed with the smith that both factions were equally odious, and the people was the sole legitimate cry in a popular commotion, would have withdrawn themselves from the approaching *mêlée*, if the smith himself, who was looked upon by them as an authority of great influence, had not—whether from resentment at the haughty bearing of the young Colonna, or from that appetite of contest not uncommon in men of a bulk and force which assure them in all personal affrays the lofty pleasure of superiority—if, I say, the smith himself had not, after a pause of indecision, retired among the Orsini, and entrained, by his example, the alliance of his friends with the favourers of that faction.

In popular commotions, each man is whirled along with the herd, often half against his own approbation or assent. The few words of peace by which Adrian di Castello commenced an address to his friends were drowned amidst their shouts. Proud to find in their ranks one of the most beloved, and one of the noblest of that name, the partisans of the Colonna placed him in their front, and charged impetuously on their foes. Adrian, however, who had acquired from circumstances something of that chivalrous code which he certainly could not have owed to his Roman birth, disdained at first to assault men among whom he recognised no equal, either in rank or the practice of arms. He contented himself with putting aside the few strokes that were aimed at him in the gathering confusion of the conflict—few;

for those who recognised him, even amidst the bitterest partisans of the Orsini, were not willing to expose themselves to the danger and odium of spilling the blood of a man, who, in addition to his great birth and the terrible power of his connections, was possessed of a personal popularity, which he owed rather to a comparison with the vices of his relatives than to any remarkable virtues hitherto displayed by himself. The smith alone, who had as yet taken no active part in the fray, seemed to gather himself up in determined opposition as the cavalier now advanced within a few steps of him.

"Did we not tell thee," quoth the giant, frowning, "that the Colonna were, not less than the Orsini, the foes of the people? Look at thy followers and clients: are they not cutting the throats of humble men by way of vengeance for the crime of a great one? But that is the way one patrician always scourges the insolence of another. He lays the rod on the backs of the people, and then cries, 'See how just I am!'"

"I do not answer thee now," answered Adrian; "but if thou regrettest with me this waste of blood, join with me in attempting to prevent it."

"I—not I! let the blood of the slaves flow to-day: the time is fast coming when it shall be washed away by the blood of the lords."

"Away, ruffian!" said Adrian, seeking no further parley, and touching the smith with the flat side of his sword. In an instant the hammer of the smith swung in the air, and, but for the active spring of the young noble, would infallibly have crushed him to the earth. Ere the smith could gain time for a second blow, Adrian's sword passed twice through his right arm, and the weapon fell heavily to the ground.

"Slay him, slay him!" cried several of the clients of the Colonna, now pressing, dastard-like, round the disarmed and disabled smith.

"Ay, slay him!" said, in tolerable Italian, but with a barbarous accent, one man, half-clad in armour, who had but just joined the group, and who was one of those wild German bandits whom the Colonna held in their pay; "he belongs to a horrible gang of miscreants sworn against all order and peace. He is one of

Rienzi's followers, and, bless the Three Kings! raves about the People."

"Thou sayest right, barbarian," said the sturdy smith, in a loud voice, and tearing aside the vest from his breast with his left hand; "come all—Colonna and Orsini—dig to this heart with your sharp blades, and when you have reached the centre, you will find there the object of your common hatred—'Rienzi and the People!'"

As he uttered these words, in language that would have seemed above his station (if a certain glow and exaggeration of phrase and sentiment were not common, when excited, to all the Romans), the loudness of his voice rose above the noise immediately round him, and stilled, for an instant, the general din; and when, at last, the words, "Rienzi and the People" rang forth, they penetrated midway through the increasing crowd, and were answered as by an echo, with a hundred voices—"Rienzi and the People!"

But whatever impression the words of the mechanic made on others, it was equally visible in the young Colonna. At the name of Rienzi the glow of excitement vanished from his cheek; he started back, muttered to himself, and for a moment seemed, even in the midst of that stirring commotion, to be lost in a moody and distant reverie. He recovered as the shout died away; and saying to the smith, in a low tone, "Friend, I am sorry for thy wound; but seek me on the morrow, and thou shalt find thou hast wronged me;" he beckoned to the German to follow him, and threaded his way through the crowd, which generally gave back as he advanced. For the bitterest hatred to the order of the nobles was at that time in Rome mingled with a servile respect for their persons, and a mysterious awe of their uncontrollable power.

As Adrian passed through that part of the crowd in which the fray had not yet commenced, the murmurs that followed him were not those which many of his race could have heard.

"A Colonna," said one

"Yet no ravisher," said another, laughing wildly.

"Nor murtherer," muttered a third, pressing his hand to his

breast. "'Tis not against *him* that my father's blood cries aloud."

"Bless him," said a fourth, "for as yet no man curses him!"

"Ah, God help us!" said an old man, with a long gray beard, leaning on his staff: "the serpent's young yet; the fangs will show by and by."

"For shame, father! he is a comely youth: and not proud in the least. What a smile he hath!" quoth a fair matron, who kept on the outskirts of the *mêlée*.

"Farewell to a man's honour when a noble smiles on his wife!" was the answer.

"Nay," said Luigi, a jolly butcher, with a roguish eye, "what a man can win fairly from maid or wife, that let him do, whether plebeian or noble—that's my morality; but when an ugly old patrician finds fair words will not win fair looks, and carries me off a dame on the back of a German boar, with a stab in the side for comfort to the spouse,—then, I say, he is a wicked man, and an adulterer."

While such were the comments and the murmurs that followed the noble, very different were the looks and words that attended the German soldier.

Equally, nay, with even greater promptitude, did the crowd make way at his armed and heavy tread; but not with looks of reverence:—the eye glared as he approached; but the cheek grew pale—the head bowed—the lip quivered; each man felt a shudder of hate and fear, as recognising a dread and mortal foe. And well and wrathfully did the fierce mercenary note the signs of the general aversion. He pushed on rudely—half-smiling in contempt, half-frowning in revenge, as he looked from side to side; and his long, matted, light hair, tawny-coloured moustache, and brawny front, contrasted strongly with the dark eyes, raven locks, and slender frames of the Italians.

"May Lucifer double damn those German cut-throats!" muttered, between his grinded teeth, one of the citizens.

"Amen!" answered, heartily, another.

"Hush!" said a third, timorously looking round; "if one of them hear thee, thou art a lost man."

"Oh, Rome! Rome! to what art thou fallen!" said bitterly

one citizen, clothed in black, and of a higher seeming than the rest; "when thou shudderest in thy streets at the tread of a hired barbarian!"

"Hark to one of our learned men, and rich citizens!" said the butcher, reverently.

"'Tis a friend of Rienzi's," quoth another of the group, lifting his cap.

With downcast eyes, and a face in which grief, shame, and wrath were visibly expressed, Pandulfo di Guido, a citizen of birth and repute, swept slowly through the crowd, and disappeared.

Meanwhile, Adrian, having gained a street which, though in the neighbourhood of the crowd, was empty and desolate, turned to his fierce comrade. "Rodolf!" said he, "mark!—no violence to the citizens. Return to the crowd, collect the friends of our house, withdraw them from the scene; let not the Colonna be blamed for this day's violence; and assure our followers, in my name, that I swear, by the knighthood I received at the Emperor's hands, that by my sword shall Martino di Porto be punished for his outrage. Fain would I, in person, allay the tumult, but my presence only seems to sanction it. Go—thou hast weight with them all."

"Ay, signor, the weight of blows!" answered the grim soldier. "But the command is hard; I would fain let their puddle-blood flow an hour or two longer. Yet, pardon me; in obeying thy orders, do I obey those of my master, thy kinsman? It is old Stephen Colonna,—who seldom spares blood or treasure, God bless him—(save his own!)—whose money I hold, and to whose hests I am sworn."

"Diavolo!" muttered the cavalier, and the angry spot was on his cheek; but, with the habitual self-control of the Italian nobles, he smothered his rising choler, and said aloud, with calmness, but dignity,—

"Do as I bid thee; check this tumult,—make *us* the forbearing party. Let all be still within one hour hence, and call on me to-morrow for thy reward; be this purse an earnest of my future thanks. As for my kinsman, whom I command thee to name more reverently, 'tis in his name I speak. Hark! the din increases—the contest swells—go—lose not another moment."

Somewhat awed by the quiet firmness of the patrician, Rodolf nodded, without answer, slid the money into his bosom, and stalked away into the thickest of the throng. But, even ere he arrived, a sudden reaction had taken place.

The young cavalier, left alone in that spot, followed with his eyes the receding form of the mercenary, as the sun, now setting, shone slant upon his glittering casque, and said bitterly to himself—"Unfortunate city, fountain of all mighty memories—fallen queen of a thousand nations—how art thou decrowned and spoiled by thy recreant and apostate children! Thy nobles divided against themselves—thy people cursing thy nobles—thy priests, who should sow peace, planting discord—the father of thy Church deserting thy stately walls, his home a refuge, his mitre a tief, his court a Gallic village—and we! we, of the haughtiest blood of Rome—we, the sons of Cæsars, and of the lineage of demigods, guarding an insolent and abhorred state by the swords of hirelings, who mock our cowardice while they receive our pay,—who keep our citizens slaves, and lord it over their very masters in return! Oh, that we, the hereditary chiefs of Rome, could but feel—oh, that we could but find, our only legitimate safeguard in the grateful hearts of our countrymen!"

So deeply did the young Adrian feel the galling truth of all he uttered, that the indignant tears rolled down his cheeks as he spoke. He felt no shame as he dashed them away; for that weakness which weeps for a fallen race is the tenderness not of women but of angels.

As he turned slowly to quit the spot, his steps were suddenly arrested by a loud shout: "Rienzi! Rienzi!" smote the air. From the walls of the Capitol to the bed of the glittering Tiber, that name echoed far and wide; and, as the shout died away, it was swallowed up in a silence so profound, so universal, so breathless, that you might have imagined that death itself had fallen over the city. And now, at the extreme end of the crowd, and elevated above their level, on vast fragments of stone which had been dragged from the ruins of Rome in one of the late frequent tumults between contending factions, to serve as a barricade for citizens against citizens,—on these silent memorials of the past grandeur, the present misery, of Rome, stood that

extraordinary man, who, above all his race, was the most penetrated with the glories of the one time, with the degradation of the other.

From the distance at which he stood from the scene, Adrian could only distinguish the dark outline of Rienzi's form ; he could only hear the faint sound of his mighty voice ; he could only perceive, in the subdued yet waving sea of human beings that spread around, their heads bared in the last rays of the sun, the unutterable effect which an eloquence, described by contemporaries almost as miraculous,—but in reality less so from the genius of the man than the sympathy of the audience,—created in all, who drank into their hearts and souls the stream of its burning thoughts.

It was but for a short time that that form was visible to the earnest eye, that that voice at intervals reached the straining ear, of Adrian di Castello ; but that time sufficed to produce all the effect which Adrian himself had desired.

Another shout, more earnest, more prolonged than the first,—a shout, in which spoke the release of swelling thoughts, of intense excitement—betokened the close of the harangue ; and then you might see, after a minute's pause, the crowd breaking in all directions, and pouring down the avenues in various knots and groups, each testifying the strong and lasting impression made upon the multitude by that address. Every cheek was flushed—every tongue spoke : the animation of the orator had passed, like a living spirit, into the breasts of the audience. He had thundered against the disorders of the patricians, yet, by a word, he had disarmed the anger of the plebeians—he had preached freedom, yet he had opposed licence. He had calmed the present, by a promise of the future. He had chid their quarrels, yet had supported their cause. He had mastered the revenge of to-day, by a solemn assurance that there should come justice for the morrow. So great may be the power, so mighty the eloquence, so formidable the genius, of one man,—without arms, without rank, without sword or ermine, who addresses himself to a people that is oppressed !

CHAPTER IV.

AN ADVENTURE.

AVOIDING the broken streams of the dispersed crowd, Adrian Colonna strode rapidly down one of the narrow streets leading to his palace, which was situated at no inconsiderable distance from the place in which the late contest had occurred. The education of his life made him feel a profound interest, not only in the divisions and disputes of his country, but also in the scene he had just witnessed, and the authority exercised by Rienzi.

An orphan of a younger, but opulent branch of the Colonna, Adrian had been brought up under the care and guardianship of his kinsman, that astute, yet valiant Stephen Colonna, who, of all the nobles of Rome, was the most powerful, alike from the favour of the pope, and the number of armed hirelings whom his wealth enabled him to maintain. Adrian had early manifested what in that age was considered an extraordinary disposition towards intellectual pursuits, and had acquired much of the little that was then known of the ancient language and the ancient history of his country.

Though Adrian was but a boy at the time in which, first presented to the reader, he witnessed the emotions of Rienzi at the death of his brother, his kind heart had been penetrated with sympathy for Cola's affliction, and shame for the apathy of his kinsmen at the result of their own feuds. He had earnestly sought the friendship of Rienzi, and, despite his years, had become aware of the power and energy of his character. But though Rienzi, after a short time, had appeared to think no more of his brother's death—though he again entered the halls of the Colonna, and shared their disdainful hospitalities, he maintained a certain distance and reserve of manner, which even Adrian could only partially overcome. He rejected every offer of service, favour, or promotion; and any unwonted proof of kindness from Adrian seemed, instead of making him more familiar, to offend him into colder distance. The easy humour

and conversational vivacity which had first rendered him a welcome guest with those who passed their lives between fighting and feasting, had changed into a vein ironical, cynical, and severe. But the dull barons were equally amused at his wit, and Adrian was almost the only one who detected the serpent couched beneath the smile.

Often Rienzi sat at the feast, silent, but observant, as if watching every look, weighing every word, taking gauge and measurement of the intellect, policy, temperament, of every guest; and when he had seemed to satisfy himself, his spirits would rise, his words flow, and while his dazzling but bitter wit lit up the revel, none saw that the unmirthful flash was the token of the coming storm. But all the while he neglected no occasion to mix with the humbler citizens, to stir up their minds, to inflame their imaginations, to kindle their emulation, with pictures of the present and with legends of the past. He grew in popularity and repute, and was yet more in power with the herd, because in favour with the nobles. Perhaps it was for that reason that he had continued the guest of the Colonna.

When, six years before the present date, the Capitol of the Cæsars witnessed the triumph of Petrarch, the scholastic fame of the young Rienzi had attracted the friendship of the poet,—a friendship that continued, with slight interruption, to the last, through careers so widely different; and afterwards, one among the Roman deputies to Avignon, he had been conjoined with Petrarch¹ to supplicate Clement VI. to remove the Holy See from Avignon to Rome. It was in this mission that, for the first time, he evinced his extraordinary powers of eloquence and persuasion. The pontiff, indeed, more desirous of ease than glory, was not convinced by the arguments, but he was enchanted with the pleader; and Rienzi returned to Rome, loaded with honours, and clothed with the dignity of high and responsible office. No longer the inactive scholar, the gay companion, he rose at once to pre-eminence above all his fellow-citizens. Never before had authority been borne with so austere

¹ According to the modern historians; but it seems more probable that Rienzi's mission to Avignon was posterior to that of Petrarch. However this be, it was at Avignon that Petrarch and Rienzi became most intimate, as Petrarch himself observes in one of his letters.

an integrity, so uncorrupt a zeal. He had sought to impregnate his colleagues with the same loftiness of principle—he had failed. Now secure in his footing, he had begun openly to appeal to the people; and already a new spirit seemed to animate the populace of Rome.

While these were the fortunes of Rienzi, Adrian had been long separated from him, and absent from Rome.

The Colonna were staunch supporters of the imperial party, and Adrian di Castello had received and obeyed an invitation to the Emperor's Court. Under that monarch he had initiated himself in arms, and, among the knights of Germany, he had learned to temper the natural Italian shrewdness with the chivalry of northern valour.

In leaving Bavaria, he had sojourned a short time in the solitude of one of his estates by the fairest lake of northern Italy; and thence, with a mind improved alike by action and study, had visited many of the free Italian states, imbibed sentiments less prejudiced than those of his order, and acquired an early reputation for himself while inly marking the characters and deeds of others. In him the best qualities of the Italian noble were united. Passionately addicted to the cultivation of letters, subtle and profound in policy, gentle and bland of manner, dignifying a love of pleasure with a certain elevation of taste, he yet possessed a gallantry of conduct and purity of honour, and an aversion from cruelty, which were then very rarely found in the Italian temperament, and which even the Chivalry of the North, while maintaining among themselves, usually abandoned the moment they came into contact with the systematic craft and disdain of honesty, which made the character of the ferocious, yet wily, South. With these qualities, he combined, indeed, the softer passions of his countrymen,—he adored Beauty, and he made a deity of Love.

He had but a few weeks returned to his native city, whither his reputation had already preceded him, and where his early affection for letters and gentleness of bearing were still remembered. He returned to find the position of Rienzi far more altered than his own. Adrian had not yet sought the scholar. He wished first to judge with his own eyes, and at a distance,

of the motives and object of his conduct ; for partly he caught the suspicions which his own order entertained of Rienzi, and partly he shared in the trustful enthusiasm of the people.

"Certainly," said he now to himself, as he walked musingly onward, "certainly no man has it more in his power to reform our diseased state, to heal our divisions, to awaken our citizens to the recollections of ancestral virtue. But that very power, how dangerous is it! Have I not seen, in the free states of Italy, men, called into authority for the sake of preserving the people, honest themselves at first, and then, drunk with the sudden rank, betraying the very cause which had exalted them? True, those men were chiefs and nobles ; but are plebeians less human? Howbeit I have heard and seen enough from afar,—I will now approach, and examine the man himself."

While thus soliloquizing, Adrian but little noted the various passengers, who, more and more rarely as the evening waned, hastened homeward. Among these were two females, who now alone shared with Adrian the long and gloomy street into which he had entered. The moon was already bright in the heavens, and, as the women passed the cavalier with a light and quick step, the younger one turned back and regarded him by the clear light with an eager, yet timid glance.

"Why dost thou tremble, my pretty one?" said her companion, who might have told some five-and-forty years, and whose garb and voice bespoke her of inferior rank to the younger female. "The streets seem quiet enough now, and, the Virgin be praised! we are not so far from home either."

"Oh! Benedetta, it is *he!* it is the young signor—it is Adrian!"

"That is fortunate," said the nurse, for such was her condition, "since they say he is as bold as a Northman: and as the Palazzo Colonna is not very far from hence, we shall be within reach of his aid should we want it: that is to say, sweet one, if you will walk a little slower than you have yet done."

The young lady slackened her pace, and sighed.

"He is certainly very handsome," quoth the nurse: "but thou must not think more of him ; he is too far above thee for marriage, and for aught else, thou art too honest, and thy brother too proud——"

"And thou, Benedetta, art too quick with thy tongue. How canst thou talk thus, when thou knowest he hath never, since at least, I was a mere child, even addressed me? nay, he scarce knows of my very existence. He, the Lord Adrian di Castello, dream of the poor Irene! The mere thought is madness!"

"Then why," said the nurse, briskly, "dost thou dream of him?"

Her companion sighed again more deeply than at first.

"Holy St. Catherine!" continued Benedetta, "if there were but one man in the world, I would die single ere I would think of him, until, at least, he had kissed my hand twice, and left it my own fault if it were not my lips instead."

The young lady still replied not.

"But how didst thou contrive to love him?" asked the nurse. "Thou canst not have seen him very often: it is but some four or five weeks since his return to Rome."

"Oh, how dull art thou!" answered the fair Irene. "Have I not told thee, again and again, that I loved him six years ago?"

"When thou hadst told but thy tenth year, and a doll would have been thy most suitable lover! As I am a Christian, Signora, thou hast made good use of thy time."

"And during his absence," continued the girl, fondly, yet sadly, "did I not hear him spoken of, and was not the mere sound of his name like a love-gift that bade me remember? And when they praised him, have I not rejoiced? and when they blamed him, have I not resented? And when they said that his lance was victorious in the tourney, did I not weep with pride? and when they whispered that his vows were welcome in the bower, wept I not as fervently with grief? Have not the six years of his absence been a dream, and was not his return a waking into light—a morning of glory and the sun? And I see him now in the church when he wots not of me; and on his happy steed as he passes by my lattice: and is not that enough of happiness for love?"

"But if he loves not *thee*?"

"Fool! I ask not that; nay, I know not if I wish it. Perhaps I would rather dream of him, such as I would have him, than

know him for what he is. He might be unkind, or ungenerous, or love me but little; rather would I not be loved at all, than loved coldly, and eat away my heart by comparing it with his. I can love him now as something abstract, unreal, and divine: but what would be my shame, my grief, if I were to find him less than I have imagined! Then, indeed, my life would have been wasted; then, indeed, the beauty of the earth would be gone!"

The good nurse was not very capable of sympathizing with sentiments like these. Even had their characters been more alike, their disparity of age would have rendered such sympathy impossible. What but youth can echo back the soul of youth—all the music of its wild vanities and romantic follies? The good nurse did not sympathize with the sentiments of her young lady, but she sympathized with the deep earnestness with which they were expressed. She thought it wondrous silly, but wondrous moving; she wiped her eyes with the corner of her veil, and hoped in her secret heart that her young charge would soon get a real husband to put such unsubstantial fantasies out of her head. There was a short pause in their conversation, when, just where two streets crossed one another, there was heard a loud noise of laughing voices and trampling feet. Torches were seen on high affronting the pale light of the moon; and, at a very short distance from the two females, in the cross street, advanced a company of seven or eight men, bearing, as seen by the red light of the torches, the formidable badge of the Orsini.

Amidst the other disorders of the time, it was no unfrequent custom for the younger or more dissolute of the nobles, in small and armed companies, to parade the streets at night, seeking occasion for a licentious gallantry among the cowering citizens, or a skirmish at arms with some rival stragglers of their own order. Such a band had Irene and her companion now chanced to encounter.

"Holy mother!" cried Benedetta, turning pale, and half running, "what curse has befallen us? How could we have been so foolish as to tarry so late at the Lady Nina's! Run, Signora,—run, or we shall fall into their hands!"

But the advice of Benedetta came too late,—the fluttering

garments of the women had been already despoiled : in a moment more they were surrounded by the marauders. A rude hand tore aside Benedetta's veil, and at sight of features, which, if time had not spared, it could never very materially injure, the rough aggressor cast the poor nurse against the wall with a curse, which was echoed by a loud laugh from his comrades.

"Thou hast a fine fortune in faces, Giuseppe!"

"Yes; it was but the other day that he seized on a girl of sixty."

"And then, by way of improving her beauty, cut her across the face with his dagger, because she was not sixteen!"

"Hush, fellows! whom have we here?" said the chief of the party, a man richly dressed, and who, though bordering upon middle age, had only the more accustomed himself to the excesses of youth; as he spoke, he snatched the trembling Irene from the grasp of his followers. "Ho, there! the torches! *Oh che bella faccia!* what blushes—what eyes!—nay, look not down, pretty one; thou needst not be ashamed to win the love of an Orsini—yes; know the triumph thou hast achieved—it is Martino di Porto who bids thee smile upon him!"

"For the blest Mother's sake release me! Nay, sir, this must not be—I am not unfriended—this insult shall not pass!"

"Hark to her silver chiding; it is better than my best hound's bay! This adventure is worth a month's watching. What! will you not come?—restive—shrieks too!—Francesco, Pietro, ye are the gentlest of the band. Wrap her veil around her,—muffle this music;—so! bear her before me to the palace, and to-morrow, sweet one, thou shalt go home with a basket of florins, which thou mayst say thou hast bought at market."

But Irene's shrieks, Irene's struggles, had already brought succour to her side, and, as Adrian approached the spot, the nurse flung herself on her knees before him.

"Oh, sweet signor, for Christ's grace save us! deliver my young mistress—her friends love you well! We are all for the Colonna, my lord; yes, indeed, all for the Colonna! Save the kin of your own clients, gracious signor!"

"It is enough that she is a woman," answered Adrian, adding, between his teeth, "and that an Orsini is her assailant." He

strode haughtily into the thickest of the group; the servitors laid hands on their swords, but gave way before him as they recognized his person; he reached the two men who had already seized Irene; in one moment he struck the foremost to the ground, in another he had passed his left arm round the light and slender form of the maiden, and stood confronting the Orsini with his drawn blade, which, however, he pointed to the ground.

"For shame, my lord—for shame!" said he, indignantly. "Will you force Rome to rise, to a man, against our order? Vex not too far the lion, chained though he be; war against *us* if ye will! draw your blades upon *men*, though they be of your own race, and speak your own tongue: but if ye would sleep at nights, and not dread the avenger's gripe,—if ye would walk the market-place secure,—wrong not a Roman woman! Yes, the very walls around us preach to you the punishment of such a deed: for that offence fell the Tarquins,—for that offence were swept away the Decemvirs,—for that offence, if ye rush upon it, the blood of your whole house may flow like water. Cease then, my lord, from this mad attempt, so unworthy your great name; cease, and thank even a Colonna that he has come between you and a moment's frenzy!"

So noble, so lofty were the air and gesture of Adrian, as he thus spoke, that even the rude servitors felt a thrill of approbation and remorse. Not so Martino di Porto. He had been struck with the beauty of the prey thus suddenly snatched from him; he had been accustomed to long outrage and to long impunity; the very sight, the very voice of a Colonna, was a blight to his eye, and a discord to his ear: what, then, when a Colonna interfered with his lusts, and rebuked his vices?

"Pedant!" he cried, with quivering lips, "prate not to me of thy vain legends and gossip's tales! think not to snatch from me my possession in another, when thine own life is in my hands. Unhand the maiden! throw down thy sword! return home without further parley, or, by my faith, and the blades of my followers—(look at them well)—thou diest!"

"Signor," said Adrian, calmly, yet while he spoke he retreated

gradually with his fair burthen towards the neighbouring wall, so as at least to leave only his front exposed to those fearful odds : "Thou wilt not so misuse the present chances, and wrong thyself in men's mouths, as to attack with eight swords even thy hereditary foe, thus cumbered, too, as he is. But—nay, hold!—if thou art so proposed, bethink thee well, one cry of my voice would soon turn the odds against thee. Thou art now in the quarter of my tribe ; thou art surrounded by the habitations of the Colonna : yon palace swarms with men who sleep not, save with harness on their backs ; men whom my voice can reach even now, but from whom, if they once taste of blood, it could not save thee !"

"He speaks true, noble Lord," said one of the band : "we have wandered too far out of our beat ; we are in their very den ; the palace of old Stephen Colonna is within call ; and, to my knowledge," added he, in a whisper, "eighteen fresh men-of-arms—ay, and Northmen too—marched through its gates this day."

"Were there eight hundred men at arm's length," answered Martino, furiously, "I would not be thus bearded amidst mine own train ! Away with yon woman ! To the attack ! to the attack !"

Thus saying he made a desperate lunge at Adrian, who having kept his eye cautiously on the movements of his enemy, was not unprepared for the assault. As he put aside the blade with his own, he shouted with a loud voice—"Colonna ! to the rescue, Colonna !"

Nor had it been without an ulterior object that the acute and self-controlling mind of Adrian had hitherto sought to prolong the parley. Even as he first addressed Orsini, he had perceived, by the moonlight, the glitter of armour upon two men advancing from the far end of the street, and judged at once, by the neighbourhood, that they must be among the mercenaries of the Colonna.

Gently he suffered the form of Irene, which now, for she had swooned with the terror, pressed too heavily upon him, to slide from his left arm, and standing over her form while sheltered from behind by the wall which he had so warily gained, he

contented himself with parrying the blows hastily aimed at him without attempting to retaliate. Few of the Romans, however accustomed to such desultory warfare, were then well and dexterously practised in the use of arms; and the science Adrian had acquired in the schools of the martial north befriended him now, even against such odds. It is true, indeed, that the followers of Orsini did not share the fury of their lord; partly afraid of the consequences to themselves should the blood of so high-born a signor be spilt by their hands, partly embarrassed with the apprehension that they should see themselves suddenly beset with the ruthless hirelings so close within hearing, they struck but aimless and random blows, looking every moment behind and aside, and rather prepared for flight than slaughter. Echoing the cry of "Colonna," poor Benedetta fled at the first clash of swords. She ran down the dreary street still shrieking that cry, and passed the very portals of Stephen's palace (where some grim forms yet loitered) without arresting her steps there, so great were her confusion and terror.

Meanwhile, the two armed men, whom Adrian had descried, proceeded leisurely up the street. The one was of a rude and common mould, his arms and his complexion testified his calling and race; and by the great respect he paid to his companion, it was evident that that companion was no native of Italy. For the brigands of the north, while they served the vices of the southern, scarce affected to disguise their contempt for his cowardice.

The companion of the brigand was a man of a martial, yet easy air. He wore no helmet, but a cap of crimson velvet, set off with a white plume; on his mantle, or surcoat, which was of scarlet, was wrought a broad white cross, both at back and breast; and so brilliant was the polish of his corselet, that, as from time to time the mantle waved aside and exposed it to the moonbeams, it glittered like light itself.

"Nay, Rodolf," said he, "if thou hast so good a lot of it here, with that hoary schemer, Heaven forbid that I should wish to draw thee back again to our merry band. But tell me—this Rienzi—thinkest thou he has any solid and formidable power?"

"Pshaw! noble chieftain, not a whit of it. He pleases the

mob ; but as for the nobles, they laugh at him ; and, as for the soldiers, he has no money !”

“ He pleases the mob, then ? ”

“ Ay, that doth he ; and when he speaks aloud to them, all the roar of Rome is hushed.”

“ Humph !—when nobles are hated, and soldiers are bought, a mob may, in any hour, become the master. An honest people and a weak mob,—a corrupt people and a strong mob,” said the other, rather to himself than to his comrade, and scarce, perhaps, conscious of the eternal truth of his aphorism. “ He is no mere brawler, this Rienzi, I suspect—I must see to it. Hark ! what noise is that ? By the Holy Sepulchre, it is the ring of our own metal !”

“ And that cry—‘ a Colonna ! ’” exclaimed Rodolf. “ Pardon me, master,—I must away to the rescue ! ”

“ Ay, it is the duty of thy hire ;—run ; yet stay, I will accompany thee, gratis for once, and from pure passion for mischief. By this hand, there is no music like clashing steel ! ”

Still Adrian continued gallantly and unwounded to defend himself, though his arm now grew tired, his breath well-nigh spent, and his eyes began to wink and reel beneath the glare of the tossing torches. Orsini himself, exhausted by his fury, had paused for an instant, fronting his foe with a heaving breast and savage looks, when, suddenly, his followers exclaimed, “ Fly ! fly !—the bandits approach—we are surrounded ! ”—and two of the servitors, without further parley, took fairly to their heels. The other five remained irresolute, and waiting but the command of their master, when he of the white plume, whom I have just described, thrust himself into the *mêlée*.

“ What ! gentles,” said he, “ have ye finished already ? Nay, let us not mar the sport ; begin again, I beseech you. What are the odds ? Ho ! six to one !—nay, no wonder that ye have waited for fairer play. See, we two will take the weaker side. Now then, let us begin again.”

“ Insolent ! ” cried the Orsini. “ Knowest thou him whom thou addressest thus arrogantly ?—I am Martino di Porto. Who art thou ? ”

“ Walter de Montreal, gentleman of Provence, and Knight of St. John ! ” answered the other, carelessly.

At that redoubted name—the name of one of the boldest warriors, and of the most accomplished freebooter of his time—even Martino's cheek grew pale, and his followers uttered a cry of terror.

“And this, my comrade,” continued the Knight, “for we may as well complete the introduction, is probably better known to you than I am, gentles of Rome; and you doubtless recognise in him Rodolf of Saxony, a brave man and a true, where he is properly paid for his services.”

“Signor,” said Adrian to his enemy, who, aghast and dumb, remained staring vacantly at the two new comers, “you are now in my power. See our own people, too, are approaching.”

And, indeed, from the palace of Stephen Colonna, torches began to blaze, and armed men were seen rapidly advancing to the spot.

“Go home in peace, and if to-morrow, or any day more suitable to thee, thou wilt meet me alone, and lance to lance, as is the wont of the knights of the empire; or with band to band, and man for man, as is rather the Roman custom; I will not fail thee—there is my gage.”

“Nobly spoken,” said Montreal; “and, if ye choose the latter, by your leave, I will be one of the party.”

Martino answered not; he took up the glove, thrust it in his bosom, and strode hastily away; only, when he had got some paces down the street, he turned back, and, shaking his clenched hand at Adrian, exclaimed, in a voice trembling with impotent rage—“Faithful to death!”

The words made one of the mottoes of the Orsini; and, whatever its earlier signification, had long passed into a current proverb to signify their hatred to the Colonna.

Adrian, now engaged in raising, and attempting to revive Irene, who was still insensible, disdainfully left it to Montreal to reply.

“I doubt not, Signor,” said the latter, coolly, “that thou wilt be faithful to Death: for Death, God wot, is the only contract which men, however ingenious, are unable to break or evade.”

“Pardon me, gentle Knight,” said Adrian, looking up from his

charge, "if I do not yet give myself wholly to gratitude. I have learned enough of knighthood to feel thou wilt acknowledge that my first duty is here—"

"Oh, a lady, then, was the cause of the quarrel! I need not ask who was in the right, when a man brings to the rivalry such odds as yon caitiff."

"Thou mistakest a little, Sir Knight,—it is but a lamb I have rescued from the wolf."

"For thy own table! Be it so!" returned the Knight, gaily.

Adrian smiled gravely, and shook his head in denial. In truth, he was somewhat embarrassed by his situation. Though habitually gallant, he was not willing to expose to misconstruction the disinterestedness of his late conduct, and (for it was his policy to conciliate popularity) to sully the credit which his bravery would give him among the citizens, by conveying Irene (whose beauty, too, as yet, he had scarcely noted) to his own dwelling; and yet, in her present situation, there was no alternative. She evinced no sign of life. He knew not her home, nor parentage. Benedetta had vanished. He could not leave her in the streets; he could not resign her to the care of another; and, as she lay now upon his breast, he felt her already endeared to him by that sense of protection which is so grateful to the human heart. He briefly, therefore, explained to those now gathered round him his present situation, and the cause of the past conflict; and bade the torch-bearers precede him to his home.

"You, Sir Knight," added he, turning to Montreal, "if not already more pleasantly lodged, will, I trust, deign to be my guest?"

"Thanks, Signor," answered Montreal, maliciously, "but I, also, perhaps, have my own affairs to watch over. Adieu! I shall seek you at the earliest occasion. Fair night, and gentle dreams!"

"Robers Bertrams qui estoit tors,
Mais à ceval estoit mult fors.
Cil avoit o lui grans effors;
Multi ot 'homes per lui mors.'" ¹

¹ "An ill-favoured man, but a stout horseman, was Robert Bertram. Great deeds were his, and many a man died by his hand."

And muttering this rugged chant from the old "Roman de Rou," the Provençal, followed by Rodolf, pursued his way.

The vast extent of Rome, and the thinness of its population, left many of the streets utterly deserted. The principal nobles were thus enabled to possess themselves of a wide range of buildings, which they fortified, partly against each other, partly against the people ; their numerous relatives and clients lived around them, forming, as it were, petty courts and cities in themselves.

Almost opposite to the principal palace of the Colonna (occupied by his powerful kinsman, Stephen) was the mansion of Adrian. Heavily swung back the massive gates at his approach ; he ascended the broad staircase, and bore his charge into an apartment which his tastes had decorated in a fashion not as yet common in that age. Ancient statues and busts were arranged around ; the pictured arras of Lombardy decorated the walls, and covered the massive seats.

"What ho ! Lights here, and wine !" cried the Seneschal.

"Let us alone," said Adrian, gazing passionately on the pale cheek of Irene, as he now, by the clear light, beheld all its beauty ; and a sweet yet burning hope crept into his heart.

CHAPTER V.

THE DESCRIPTION OF A CONSPIRATOR, AND THE DAWN OF THE CONSPIRACY.

ALONE, by a table covered with various papers, sat a man in the prime of life. The chamber was low and long ; many antique and disfigured bas-reliefs and torsos were placed around the wall, interspersed, here and there, with the short sword and close casque, time-worn relics of the prowess of ancient Rome. Right above the table at which he sate, the moonlight streamed through a high and narrow casement, deep sunk in the massy wall. In a niche to the right of this window, guarded by a sliding door, which was now partially drawn aside—but which, by its solid substance, and the sheet of iron with which it was

plated, testified how valuable, in the eyes of the owner, was the treasure it protected—were ranged some thirty or forty volumes, then deemed no inconsiderable library ; and being, for the most part, the laborious copies in manuscript by the hand of the owner, from immortal originals.

Leaning his cheek on his hand, his brow somewhat knit, his lip slightly compressed, that personage indulged in meditations far other than the indolent dreams of scholars. As the high and still moonlight shone upon his countenance, it gave an additional and solemn dignity to features which were naturally of a grave and majestic cast. Thick and auburn hair, the colour of which, not common to the Romans, was ascribed to his descent from the Teuton emperor, clustered in large curls above a high and expansive forehead ; and even the present thoughtful compression of the brow could not mar the aspect of latent power which it derived from that great breadth between the eyes, in which the Grecian sculptors of old so admirably conveyed the expression of authority, and the silent energy of command. But his features were not cast in the Grecian, still less in the Teuton mould. The iron jaw, the aquiline nose, the somewhat sunken cheek, strikingly recalled the character of the hard Roman race, and might not inaptly have suggested to a painter a model for the younger Brutus.

The marked outline of the face, and the short, firm upper lip, were not concealed by the beard and mustachios usually then worn ; and, in the faded portrait of the person now described, still extant at Rome, may be traced a certain resemblance to the popular pictures of Napoleon ; not indeed in the features, which are more stern and prominent in the portrait of the Roman, but in that peculiar expression of concentrated and tranquil power which so nearly realizes the ideal of intellectual majesty. Though still young, the personal advantages most peculiar to youth,—the bloom and glow, the rounded cheek in which care had not yet ploughed its lines, the full unsunken eye, and the slender delicacy of frame,—these were not the characteristics of that solitary student. And, though considered by his contemporaries as eminently handsome, the judgment was proba'bly formed less from the more vulgar claims to such

distinction, than from the height of the stature, an advantage at that time more esteemed than at present, and that nobler order of beauty which cultivated genius and commanding character usually stamp upon even homely features;—the more rare in an age so rugged.

The character of Rienzi (for the youth presented to the reader in the first chapter of this history is now again before him in maturer years) had acquired greater hardness and energy with each stepping-stone to power. There was a circumstance attendant on his birth which had, probably, exercised great and early influence on his ambition. Though his parents were in humble circumstances, and of lowly calling, his father was the natural son of the Emperor, Henry VII.;¹ and it was the pride of the parents that probably gave to Rienzi the unwonted advantages of education. This pride transmitted to himself,—his descent from royalty dinned into his ear, infused into his thoughts, from his cradle,—made him, even in his earliest youth, deem himself the equal of the Roman signors, and half unconsciously aspire to be their superior. But, as the literature of Rome was unfolded to his eager eye and ambitious heart, he became imbued with that pride of country which is nobler than the pride of birth; and, save when stung by allusions to his origin, he unaffectedly valued himself more on being a Roman plebeian than the descendant of a Teuton king. His brother's death, and the vicissitudes he himself had already undergone, deepened the earnest and solemn qualities of his character; and, at length, all the faculties of a very uncommon intellect were concentrated into one object—which borrowed from a mind strongly and mystically religious, as well as patriotic, a sacred aspect, and grew at once a duty and a passion.

"Yes," said Rienzi, breaking suddenly from his reverie, "yes, the day is at hand when Rome shall rise again from her ashes; Justice shall dethrone Oppression; men shall walk safe in their

¹ De Sade supposes that the *mother* of Rienzi was the daughter of an illegitimate son of Henry VII., supporting his opinion from a MS. in the Vatican. But, according to the contemporaneous biographer, Rienzi, in addressing Charles, king of Bohemia, claims the relationship from his father. "Di vostro legnaggio sono—figlio di bastardo d'Enrico imperatore," &c. A more recent writer, il Padre Gabrini, cites an inscription in support of this descent: "Nicolaus Tribunus Laurentii Teutonici Filius," &c.

ancient Forum. We will rouse from his forgotten tomb the indomitable soul of Cato! There shall be a *people* once more in Rome! And I—I shall be the instrument of that triumph—the restorer of my race! mine shall be the first voice to swell the battle-cry of freedom—mine the first hand to rear her banner—yes, from the height of my own soul as from a mountain, I see already rising the liberties and the grandeur of the New Rome; and on the corner-stone of the mighty fabric posterity shall read my name.”

Uttering these lofty boasts, the whole person of the speaker seemed instinct with his ambition. He strode the gloomy chamber with light and rapid steps, as if on air; his breast heaved, his eyes glowed. He felt that love itself can scarcely bestow a rapture equal to that which is felt, in his first virgin enthusiasm, by a patriot who knows himself *sincere*!

There was a slight knock at the door, and a servitor, in the rich liveries worn by the Pope's officials,¹ presented himself.

“Signor,” said he, “my Lord, the Bishop of Orvietto, is without.”

“Ha! that is fortunate. Lights there!—My Lord, this is an honour which I can estimate better than express.”

“Tut, tut! my good friend,” said the Bishop, entering, and seating himself familiarly, “no ceremonies between the servants of the Church; and never, I ween well, had she greater need of true friends than now. These unholy tumults, these licentious contentions, in the very shrines and city of St. Peter, are sufficient to scandalize all Christendom.”

“And so will it be,” said Rienzi, “until his Holiness himself shall be graciously persuaded to fix his residence in the seat of his predecessors, and curb with a strong arm the excesses of the nobles.”

“Alas, man!” said the Bishop, “thou knowest that these words are but as wind; for were the Pope to fulfil thy wishes, and remove from Avignon to Rome, by the blood of St. Peter! he would not curb the nobles, but the nobles would curb him. Thou knowest well that until his blessed predecessor, of pious

¹ Not the present hideous habiliments, which are said to have been the invention of Michael Angelo.

memory, conceived the wise design of escaping to Avignon, the Father of the Christian world was but like many other fathers in their old age, controlled and guarded by his rebellious children. Recollectest thou not how the noble Boniface himself, a man of great heart, and nerves of iron, was kept in thralldom by the ancestors of the Orsini—his entrances and exits made but at their will—so that, like a caged eagle, he beat himself against his bars and died? Verily, thou talkest of the memories of Rome—these are not the memories that are very attractive to popes.”

“Well,” said Rienzi, laughing gently, and drawing his seat nearer to the Bishop’s, “my Lord has certainly the best of the argument at present; and I must own, that strong, licentious, and unhallowed as the order of nobility was then, it is yet more so now.”

“Even I,” rejoined Raimond, colouring as he spoke, “though Vicar of the Pope, and representative of his spiritual authority, was, but three days ago, subjected to a coarse affront from that very Stephen Colonna, who has ever received such favour and tenderness from the Holy See. His servitors jostled mine in the open streets, and I myself—I, the delegate of the sire of kings—was forced to draw aside to the wall, and wait until the hoary insolent swept by. Nor were blaspheming words wanting to complete the insult. ‘Pardon, Lord Bishop,’ said he, as he passed me; ‘but this world, thou knowest, must necessarily take precedence of the other.’”

“Dared he so high?” said Rienzi, shading his face with his hand, as a very peculiar smile—scarcely itself joyous, though it made others gay, and which completely changed the character of his face, naturally grave even to sternness—played round his lips. “Then it is time for thee, holy father, as for us, to——”

“To what?” interrupted the Bishop, quickly. “Can we effect aught? Dismiss thy enthusiastic dreamings—descend to the real earth—look soberly round us. Against men so powerful, what *can* we do?”

“My Lord,” answered Rienzi, gravely, “it is the misfortune of signors of your rank never to know the people, or the accurate signs of the time. As those who pass over the heights

of mountains see the clouds sweep below, veiling the plains and valleys from their gaze, while they, only a little above the level, survey the movements and the homes of men; even so from your lofty eminence ye behold but the indistinct and sullen vapours—while from my humbler station I see the preparations of the shepherds to shelter themselves and herds from the storm which those clouds betoken. Despair not, my Lord; endurance goes but to a certain limit—to that limit it is already stretched; Rome waits but the occasion (it will soon come, but not suddenly) to rise simultaneously against her oppressors.”

The great secret of eloquence is to be in earnest—the great secret of Rienzi’s eloquence was in the mightiness of his enthusiasm. He never spoke as one who doubted of success. Perhaps, like most men who undertake high and great actions, he himself was never thoroughly aware of the obstacles in his way. He saw the end, bright and clear, and overleaped, in the vision of his soul, the crosses and the length of the path; thus the deep convictions of his own mind stamped themselves irresistibly upon others. He seemed less to promise than to prophesy.

The Bishop of Orvietto, not over wise, yet a man of cool temperament and much worldly experience, was forcibly impressed by the energy of his companion; perhaps, indeed, the more so, inasmuch as his own pride and his own passions were also enlisted against the arrogance and licence of the nobles. He paused ere he replied to Rienzi.

“But is it,” he asked, at length, “only the plebeians who will rise? Thou knowest how they are caitiff and uncertain.”

“My Lord,” answered Rienzi, “judge, by one fact, how strongly I am surrounded by friends of no common class. Thou knowest how loudly I speak against the nobles. I cite them by their name—I beard the Savelli, the Orsini, the Colonna, in their very hearing. Thinkest thou that they forgive me? thinkest thou that, were only the plebeians my safeguard and my favourers, they would not seize me by open force—that I had not long ere this found a gag in their dungeons, or been swallowed up in the eternal dumbness of the grave? Observe,” continued he, ^{as} reading the Vicar’s countenance, he perceived the

impression he had made; "observe that, throughout the whole world, a great revolution has begun. The barbaric darkness of centuries has been broken; the KNOWLEDGE which made men as demigods in the past time has been called from her urn; a Power, subtler than brute force, and mightier than armed men, is at work. We have begun once more to do homage to the Royalty of Mind. Yes; that same Power which, a few years ago, crowned Petrarch in the Capitol, when it witnessed, after the silence of twelve centuries, the glories of a TRIUMPH—which heaped upon a man of obscure birth, and unknown in arms, the same honours given of old to emperors and the vanquishers of kings—which united in one act of homage even the rival houses of Colonna and Orsini—which made the haughtiest patricians emulous to bear the train, to touch but the purple robe of the son of the Florentine plebeian—which still draws the eyes of Europe to the lowly cottage of Vaucuse—which gives to the humble student the all-acknowledged licence to admonish tyrants, and approach, with haughty prayers, even the Father of the Church!—yes; that same Power, which, working silently throughout Italy, murmurs under the solid base of the Venetian oligarchy;¹ which, beyond the Alps, has wakened into visible and sudden life in Spain, in Germany, in Flanders; and which, even in that barbarous Isle, conquered by the Norman sword, ruled by the bravest of living kings,² has roused a spirit Norman cannot break—kings to rule over must rule by—yes, that same Power is everywhere abroad: it speaks, it conquers in the voice even of him who is before you; it unites in his cause all on whom but one glimmering of light has burst, all in whom one generous desire can be kindled! Know, Lord Vicar, that there is not a man in Rome, save our oppressors themselves—not a man who has learned one syllable of our ancient tongue—whose heart and sword are not with me. The peaceful cultivators of letters—the proud nobles of the second order—the rising race,

¹ It was about eight years afterwards that the long-smothered hate of the Venetian people to that wisest and most vigilant of all oligarchies, the Sparta of Italy, broke out in the conspiracy under Marino Faliero.

² Edward III., in whose reign opinions far more popular than those of the following century began to work. The Civil Wars threw back the action into the blood. It was indeed an age throughout the world which put forth abundant blossoms, but crude and unripened fruit;—a singular leap, followed by as singular a pause.

wiser than their slothful sires; above all, my Lord, the humbler ministers of religion, priests and monks, whom luxury hath not blinded, pomp hath not deafened, to the monstrous outrage to Christianity daily and nightly perpetrated in the Christian Capital; these—all these—are linked with the merchant and the artisan in one indissoluble bond, waiting but the signal to fall or to conquer, to live freemen, or to die martyrs, with Rienzi and their country!"

"Sayest thou so in truth?" said the Bishop, startled, and half rising. "Prove but thy words, and thou shalt not find the ministers of God are less eager than their lay brethren for the happiness of men."

"What I say," rejoined Rienzi, in a cooler tone, "that can I show! But I may only prove it to those who will be with us."

"Fear me not," answered Raimond: "I know well the secret mind of his Holiness, whose delegate and representative I am; and could he see but the legitimate and natural limit set to the power of the patricians, who, in their arrogance, have set at nought the authority of the Church itself, be sure that he would smile on the hand that drew the line. Nay, so certain of this am I, that if ye succeed, I, his responsible but unworthy vicar, will myself sanction the success. But beware of crude attempts; the Church must not be weakened by linking itself to failure."

"Right, my Lord," answered Rienzi; "and in this, the policy of religion is that of freedom. Judge of my prudence by my long delay. He who can see all around him impatient—himself not less so—and yet suppress the signal, and bide the hour, is not likely to lose his cause by rashness."

"More, then, of this anon," said the Bishop, resettling himself in his seat. "As thy plans mature, fear not to communicate with me. Believe that Rome has no firmer friend than he who, ordained to preserve order, finds himself impotent against aggression. Meanwhile, to the object of my present visit, which links itself, in some measure, perhaps, with the topics on which we have conversed . . . Thou knowest that when his Holiness intrusted thee with thy present office, he bade thee also announce his beneficent intention of granting a general Jubilee at Rome for the year 1350—a most admirable design for two reasons,

sufficiently apparent to thyself: first, that every Christian soul that may undertake the pilgrimage to Rome on that occasion, may thus obtain a general remission of sins; and secondly, because, to speak carnally, the concourse of pilgrims so assembled usually, by the donations and offerings their piety suggests, very materially add to the revenues of the Holy See: at this time, by the way, in no very flourishing condition. This thou knowest, dear Rienzi."

Rienzi bowed his head in assent, and the prelate continued—

"Well, it is with the greatest grief that his Holiness perceives that his pious intentions are likely to be frustrated: for so fierce and numerous are now the brigands in the public approaches to Rome, that, verily, the boldest pilgrim may tremble a little to undertake the journey; and those who do so venture will, probably, be composed of the poorest of the Christian community—men who, bringing with them neither gold, nor silver, nor precious offerings, will have little to fear from the rapacity of the brigands. Hence arise two consequences: on the one hand, the rich—whom, Heaven knows, and the Gospel has, indeed, expressly declared, have the most need of a remission of sins—will be deprived of this glorious occasion for absolution; and, on the other hand, the coffers of the Church will be impiously defrauded of that wealth which it would otherwise doubtless obtain from the zeal of her children."

"Nothing can be more logically manifest, my Lord," said Rienzi.

The Vicar continued—"Now, in letters received five days since from his Holiness, he bade me expose these fearful consequences to Christianity to the various patricians who are legitimately fiefs of the Church, and command their resolute combination against the marauders of the road. With these have I conferred, and vainly."

"For by the aid, and from the troops, of those very brigands, these patricians have fortified their palaces against each other," added Rienzi.

"Exactly for that reason," rejoined the Bishop. "Nay, Stephen Colonna himself had the audacity to confess it. Utterly unmoved by the loss to so many precious souls, and, I may add,

to the papal treasury, which ought to be little less dear to right-discerning men, they refuse to advance a step against the bandits. Now, then, hearken to the second mandate of his Holiness:—'Failing the nobles,' saith he, in his prophetic sagacity, 'confer with Cola di Rienzi. He is a bold man, and a pious, and, thou tellest me, of great weight with the people; and say to him, that if his wit can devise the method for extirpating these sons of Belial, and rendering a safe passage along the public ways, largely, indeed, will he merit at our hands—lasting will be the gratitude we shall owe to him; and whatever succour thou, and the servants of our See, can render to him, let it not be stinted.'"

"Said his Holiness thus?" exclaimed Rienzi. "I ask no more. The gratitude is mine that he hath thought thus of his servant, and intrusted me with this charge; at once I accept it—at once I pledge myself to success. Let us, my Lord, let us, then, clearly understand the limits ordained to my discretion. To curb the brigands without the walls, I must have authority over those within. If I undertake, at peril of my life, to clear all the avenues to Rome of the robbers who now infest it, shall I have full licence for conduct bold, peremptory, and severe?"

"Such conduct the very nature of the charge demands," replied Raimond.

"Ay—even though it be exercised against the arch offenders—against the supporters of the brigands—against the haughtiest of the nobles themselves?"

The Bishop paused, and looked hard in the face of the speaker. "I repeat," said he, at length, sinking his voice, and with a significant tone, "in these bold attempts success is the sole sanction. *Succeed*, and we will excuse thee all—even to the ——"

"Death of a Colonna or an Orsini, should justice demand it; and provided it be according to the law, and only incurred by the violation of the law!" added Rienzi, firmly.

The Bishop did not reply in words, but a slight motion of his head was sufficient answer to Rienzi.

"My Lord," said he, "from this time, then, all is well. I date the revolution—the restoration of order of the state—from this

hour, this very conference. Till now, knowing that justice must never wink upon great offenders, I had hesitated, through fear lest thou and his Holiness might deem it severity, and blame him who replaces the law, because he smites the violators of law. Now I judge ye more rightly. Your hand, my Lord."

The Bishop extended his hand; Rienzi grasped it firmly, and then raised it respectfully to his lips. Both felt that the compact was sealed.

This conference, so long in recital, was short in the reality; but its object was already finished, and the Bishop rose to depart. The outer portal of the house was opened, the numerous servitors of the Bishop held on high their torches, and he had just turned from Rienzi, who had attended him to the gate, when a female passed hastily through the Prelate's train, and starting as she beheld Rienzi, flung herself at his feet.

"Oh, hasten, Sir! hasten, for the love of God, hasten! or the young Signora is lost for ever!"

"The Signora!—Heaven and earth, Benedetta, of whom do you speak?—of my sister—of Irene? is she not within?"

"Oh, Sir—the Orsini—the Orsini!"

"What of them?—speak, woman!"

Here, breathlessly, and with many a break, Benedetta recounted to Rienzi, in whom the reader has already recognized the brother of Irene, so far of the adventure with Martino di-Porte as she had witnessed: of the termination and result of the contest she knew nought.

Rienzi listened in silence; but the deadly paleness of his countenance, and the writhing of the nether lip, testified the emotions to which he gave no audible vent.

"You hear, my Lord Bishop—you hear," said he, when Benedetta had concluded; and turning to the Bishop, whose departure the narrative had delayed—"you hear to what outrage the citizens of Rome are subjected. My hat and sword! instantly! My Lord, forgive my abruptness."

"Whither art thou bent, then?" asked Raimond.

"Whither—whither!—Ay, I forgot, my Lord, you have no sister. Perhaps, too, you had no brother?—No, no; one victim

at least I will live to save. Whither, you ask me?—to the palace of Martino di Porto.”

“To an Orsini *alone*, and for justice?”

“Alone, and for *justice*!—No!” shouted Rienzi, in a loud voice, as he seized his sword, now brought to him by one of his servants, and rushed from the house: “but one man is sufficient for *revenge*!”

The Bishop paused for a moment’s deliberation. “He must not be lost,” muttered he, “as he well may be, if exposed thus solitary to the wolf’s rage. What, ho!” he cried aloud; “advance the torches!—quick, quick! We ourself—we, the Vicar of the Pope—will see to this. Calm yourselves, good people; your young Signora shall be restored. On! to the palace of Martino di Porto!”

CHAPTER VI.

IRENE IN THE PALACE OF ADRIAN DI CASTELLO.

As the Cyprian gazed on the image in which he had embodied a youth of dreams, what time the living hues flushed slowly beneath the marble,—so gazed the young and passionate Adrian upon the form reclined before him, re-awakening gradually to life. And, if the beauty of that face were not of the loftiest or the most dazzling order, if its soft and quiet character might be outshone by many, of loveliness less really perfect, yet never was there a countenance that, to some eyes, would have seemed more charming, and never one in which more eloquently was wrought that ineffable and virgin expression which Italian art seeks for in its models,—in which modesty is the outward, and tenderness the latent, expression; the bloom of youth, both of form and heart, ere the first frail and delicate freshness of either is brushed away: and when even love itself, the only unquiet visitant that should be known at such an age, is but a sentiment, and not a passion!

“Benedetta!” murmured Irene, at length opening her eyes, unconsciously, upon him who knelt beside her,—eyes of that

uncertain, that most liquid hue, on which you might gaze for years and never learn the secret of the colour, so changed it with the dilating pupil,—darkening in the shade, and brightening into azure in the light :

“Benedetta,” said Irene, “where art thou? Oh, Benedetta! I have had such a dream.”

“And I, too, such a vision!” thought Adrian.

“Where am I?” cried Irene, rising from the couch. “This room—these hangings—Holy Virgin! do I dream still!—and you! Heavens!—it is the Lord Adrian di Castello!”

“Is that a name thou hast been taught to fear?” said Adrian; “if so, I will forswear it.”

If Irene now blushed deeply, it was not in that wild delight with which her romantic heart might have foretold that she would listen to the first words of homage from Adrian di Castello. Bewildered and confused,—terrified at the strangeness of the place, and shrinking even from the thought of finding herself alone with one who for years had been present to her fancies,—alarm and distress were the emotions she felt the most, and which most were impressed upon her speaking countenance; and as Adrian now drew nearer to her, despite the gentleness of his voice and the respect of his looks, her fears, not the less strong that they were vague, increased upon her; she retreated to the further end of the room, looked wildly round her, and then, covering her face with her hands, burst into a paroxysm of tears.

Moved himself by these tears, and divining her thoughts, Adrian forgot for a moment all the more daring wishes he had formed.

“Fear not, sweet lady,” said he earnestly: “recollect thyself, I beseech thee; no peril, no evil can reach thee here; it was this hand that saved thee from the outrage of the Orsini—this roof is but the shelter of a friend! Tell me, then, fair wonder, thy name and residence, and I will summon my servitors, and guard thee to thy home at once.”

Perhaps the relief of tears, even more than Adrian’s words, restored Irene to herself, and enabled her to comprehend her novel situation; and as her senses, thus cleared, told her what

she owed to him whom her dreams had so long imaged as the ideal of all excellence, she recovered her self-possession, and uttered her thanks with a grace not the less winning, if it still partook of embarrassment.

"Thank me not," answered Adrian, passionately. "I have touched thy hand—I am repaid. Repaid! nay, all gratitude—all homage is for me to render!"

Blushing again, but with far different emotions than before, Irene, after a momentary pause, replied, "Yet, my Lord, I must consider it a debt the more weighty that you speak of it so lightly. And now, complete the obligation. I do not see my companion—suffer her to accompany me home; it is but a short way hence."

"Blessed, then, is the air that I have breathed so unconsciously!" said Adrian. "But thy companion, dear lady, is not here. She fled, I imagine, in the confusion of the conflict; and not knowing thy name, nor being able, in thy then state, to learn it from thy lips, it was my happy necessity to convey thee hither; but I will be thy companion. Nay, why that timid glance? my people, also, shall attend us."

"My thanks, noble Lord, are of little worth; my brother who is not unknown to thee, will thank thee more fittingly. May I depart?" and Irene, as she spoke, was already at the door.

"Art thou so eager to leave me?" answered Adrian, sadly. "Alas! when thou hast departed from my eyes, it will seem as if the moon had left the night!—but it is happiness to obey thy wishes, even though they tear thee from me."

A slight smile parted Irene's lips, and Adrian's heart beat audibly to himself, as he drew from that smile, and those down-cast eyes, no unfavourable omen.

Reluctantly and slowly he turned towards the door, and summoned his attendants. "But," said he, as they stood on the lofty staircase, "thou sayest, sweet lady, that thy brother's name is not unknown to me. Heaven grant that he be, indeed, a friend of the Colonna!"

"His boast," answered Irene, evasively, "the boast of Cola di Rienzi is, to be a friend to the friends of Rome."

"Holy Virgin of Ara Cœli!—is thy brother that extraordinary

man?" exclaimed Adrian, as he foresaw, at the mention of that name, a barrier to his sudden passion. "Alas! in a Colonna in a noble, he will see no merit; even though thy fortunate deliverer, sweet maiden, sought to be his early friend!"

"Thou wrongest him much, my Lord," returned Irene, warmly; "he is a man above all others to sympathize with thy generous valour, even had it been exerted in defence of the humblest woman in Rome,—how much more, then, when in protection of his sister!"

"The times are, indeed, diseased," answered Adrian, thoughtfully, as they now found themselves in the open street, "when men who alike mourn for the woes of their country are yet suspicious of each other: when to be a patrician is to be regarded as an enemy to the people; when to be termed the friend of the people is to be considered a foe to the patricians; but come what may, oh! let me hope, dear lady, that no doubts, no divisions, shall banish from *thy* breast one gentle memory of me!"

"Ah! little, little do you know me!" began Irene, and stopped suddenly short.

"Speak! speak again!—of what music has this envious silence deprived my soul! Thou wilt not, then, forget me? And," continued Adrian, "we shall meet again? It is to Rienzi's house we are bound now; to-morrow I shall visit my old companion—to-morrow I shall see thee, Will it not be so?"

In Irene's silence was her answer.

"And as thou hast told me thy brother's name, make it sweet to my ear, and add to it thine own."

"They call me Irene."

"Irene, Irene!—let me repeat it. It is a soft name, and dwells upon the lips as if loath to leave them—a fitting name for one like thee."

Thus making his welcome court to Irene, in that flowered and glowing language which, if more peculiar to that age and to the gallantry of the south, is also the language in which the poetry of youthful passion would, in all times and lands, utter its rich extravagance, could heart speak to heart, Adrian conveyed homeward his beautiful charge, taking, however, the most

circuitous and lengthened route ; an artifice which Irene either perceived not, or silently forgave. They were now within sight of the street in which Rienzi dwelt, when a party of men, bearing torches, came unexpectedly upon them. It was a train of the Bishop of Orvietto, returning from the palace of Martino di Porto, and in their way (accompanied by Rienzi) to that of Adrian. They had learned at the former, without an interview with the Orsini, from the retainers in the court below, the fortune of the conflict, and the name of Irene's champion ; and, despite Adrian's general reputation for gallantry, Rienzi knew enough of his character, and the nobleness of his temper, to feel assured that Irene was safe in his protection. Alas ! in that very safety to the person is often the most danger to the heart. Woman never so dangerously loves, as when he who loves her, for her sake, subdues himself.

Clasped to her brother's breast, Irene bade him thank her deliverer ; and Rienzi, with that fascinating frankness which sits so well on those usually reserved, and which all who would rule the hearts of their fellow-men must at times command, advanced to the young Colonna, and poured forth his gratitude and praise.

"We have been severed too long,—we must know each other again," replied Adrian. "I shall seek thee ere long, be assured."

Turning to take his leave of Irene, he conveyed her hand to his lips, and pressing it, as it dropped from his clasp, was he deceived in thinking that those delicate fingers lightly, involuntarily, returned the pressure ?

CHAPTER VII.

UPON LOVE AND LOVERS.

IF, in adopting the legendary love tale of Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare had changed the scene in which it is cast for a more northern clime, we may doubt whether the art of Shakespeare himself could have reconciled us at once to the suddenness

and the strength of Juliet's passion. And even as it is, perhaps there are few of our rational and sober-minded islanders who would not honestly confess, if fairly questioned, that they deem the romance and fervour of those ill-starred lovers of Verona exaggerated and overdrawn. Yet in Italy, the picture of that affection born of a night—but "strong as death"—is one to which the veriest commonplaces of life would afford parallels without number. As in different ages, so in different climes, love varies wonderfully in the shapes it takes. And even at this day, beneath Italian skies, many a simple girl would feel as Juliet, and many a homely gallant would rival the extravagance of Romeo. Long suits in that sunny land, wherein, as whereof, I now write, are unknown. In no other land, perhaps, is there found so commonly the love at first sight, which in France is a jest, and in England a doubt; in no other land, too, is love, though so suddenly conceived, more faithfully preserved. That which is ripened in fancy comes at once to passion, yet is embalmed through all time by sentiment. And this must be my and their excuse, if the love of Adrian seemed too prematurely formed, and that of Irene too romantically conceived;—it is the excuse which they take from the air and sun, from the customs of their ancestors, from the soft contagion of example. But while they yielded to the dictates of their hearts, it was with a certain though secret sadness—a presentiment that had, perhaps, its charm, though it was of cross and evil. Born of so proud a race, Adrian could scarcely dream of marriage with the sister of a plebeian; and Irene, unconscious of the future glory of her brother, could hardly have cherished any hope, save that of being loved. Yet these adverse circumstances, which, in the harder, the more prudent, the more self-denying, perhaps the more virtuous minds, that are formed beneath the northern skies, would have been an inducement to wrestle against love so placed, only contributed to feed and strengthen *theirs* by an opposition which has ever its attraction for romance. They found frequent, though short, opportunities of meeting—not quite alone, but only in the conniving presence of Benedetta: sometimes in the public gardens, sometimes amidst the vast and deserted ruins by which the house of Rienzi was surrounded.

They surrendered themselves, without much question of the future, to the excitement—the elysium—of the hour : they lived but from day to day ; *their* future was the next time they should meet ; beyond that epoch, the very mists of their youthful love closed in obscurity and shadow which they sought not to penetrate : and as yet they had not arrived at that period of affection when there was danger of their fall,—their love had not passed the golden portal where Heaven ceases and Earth begins. Everything for them was the poetry, the vagueness, the refinement,—not the power, the concentration, the mortality,—of desire ! The look—the whisper—the brief pressure of the hand,—at most, the first kisses of love, rare and few,—these marked the human limits of that sentiment which filled them with a new life, which elevated them as with a new soul.

The roving tendencies of Adrian were at once fixed and centred ; the dreams of his tender mistress had awakened to a life dreaming still, but “rounded with a *truth*.” All that earnestness, and energy, and fervour of emotion, which, in her brother broke forth in the schemes of patriotism, and the aspirations of power, were, in Irene, softened down into one object of existence, one concentration of soul,—and that was love. Yet, in this range of thought and action, so apparently limited, there was, in reality, no less boundless a sphere than in the wide space of her brother’s many-pathed ambition. Not the less had she the power and scope for all the loftiest capacities granted to our clay. Equal was her enthusiasm for her idol ; equal, had she been equally tried, would have been her generosity, her devotion :—greater, be sure, her courage ; more inalienable her worship ; more unsullied by selfish purposes and sordid views. Time, change, misfortune, ingratitude, would have left *her* the same ! What state could fall, what liberty decay, if the zeal of man’s noisy patriotism were as pure as the silent loyalty of a woman’s love ?

In them everything *was young* !—the heart unchilled, unblighted,—that fulness and luxuriance of life’s life which has in it something of divine. At that age, when it seems as if we could never die, how deathless, how flushed and mighty as with the youngness of a god, is all that our hearts create ! Our own youth is like that of the earth itself, when it peopled the woods

and waters with divinities ; when life ran riot, and yet only gave birth to beauty ;—all its shapes, of poetry,—all its airs, the melodies of Arcady and Olympus ! The Golden Age never leaves the world : it exists still, and shall exist, till love, health, poetry, are no more ; but only for the young !

If I now dwell, though but for a moment, on the interlude in a drama calling forth more masculine passions than that of love, it is because I foresee that the occasion will but rarely recur. If I linger on the description of Irene and her hidden affection, rather than wait for circumstances to portray them better than the author's words can, it is because I foresee that that loving and lovely image must continue to the last rather a shadow than a portrait,—thrown in the background, as is the real destiny of such natures, by bolder figures and more gorgeous colours ; a something whose presence is rather felt than seen, and whose very harmony with the whole consists in its retiring and subdued repose.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ENTHUSIASTIC MAN JUDGED BY THE DISCREET MAN.

"THOU wrongest me," said Rienzi, warmly, to Adrian, as they sat alone, towards the close of a long conference ; "I do not play the part of a mere demagogue ; I wish not to stir the great deeps in order that my lees of fortune may rise to the surface. So long have I brooded over the past, that it seems to me as if I had become a part of it—as if I had no separate existence. I have coined my whole soul into one master passion,—and its end is the restoration of Rome."

"But by what means?"

"My Lord ! my Lord ! there is but one way to restore the greatness of a people—it is an appeal to the people themselves. It is not in the power of princes and barons to make a state permanently glorious ; they raise themselves, but they raise not the people with them. All great regenerations are the universal movement of the mass."

"Nay," answered Adrian, "then have we read history differently. To me, all great regenerations seem to have been the work of the few, and tacitly accepted by the multitude. But let us not dispute after the manner of the schools. Thou sayest loudly that a vast crisis is at hand! that the Good Estate (*buono stato*) shall be established. How? where are your arms?—your soldiers? Are the nobles less strong than heretofore? is the mob more bold, more constant? Heaven knows that I speak not with the prejudices of my order—I weep for the debasement of my country! I am a Roman, and in that name I forget that I am a noble. But I tremble at the storm you would raise so hazardously. If your insurrection succeed, it will be violent: it will be purchased by blood—by the blood of all the loftiest names of Rome. You will aim at a second expulsion of the Tarquins; but it will be more like a second proscription of Sylla. Massacres and disorders never pave the way to peace. If, on the other hand, you fail, the chains of Rome are riveted for ever: an ineffectual struggle to escape is but an excuse for additional tortures to the slave."

"And what, then, would the Lord Adrian have us do?" said Rienzi, with that peculiar and sarcastic smile which has before been noted. "Shall we wait till the Colonna and Orsini quarrel no more? shall we ask the Colonna for liberty, and the Orsini for justice? My Lord, we cannot appeal to the nobles against the nobles. We must not ask them to moderate their power: we must restore to ourselves that power. There may be danger in the attempt—but we attempt it amongst the monuments of the Forum: and if we fall—we shall perish worthy of our sires! Ye have high descent, and sounding titles, and wide lands, and you talk of *your* ancestral honours! We, too,—we plebeians of Rome,—we have *ours*! Our fathers were freemen! where is our heritage? not sold—not given away: but stolen from us, now by fraud, now by force—filched from us in our sleep; or wrung from us with fierce hands, amidst our cries and struggles. My Lord, we but ask that lawful heritage to be restored to us: to us—nay, to you it is the same; your liberty, alike, is gone. Can you dwell in your father's house, without towers, and fortresses, and the bought swords of bravos? can you walk

in the streets at dark without arms and followers? True, *you*, a noble, may retaliate; though *we* dare not. You, in your turn, may terrify and outrage others; but does licence compensate for liberty? They have given you pomp and power—but the safety of equal laws were a better gift. Oh, were I you—were I Stephen Colonna himself, I should pant, ay, thirstily as I do now, for that free air which comes not through bars and bulwarks against my fellow-citizens, but in the open space of Heaven—safe, because protected by the silent Providence of Law, and not by the lean fears and hollow-eyed suspicions which are the comrades of a hated power. The tyrant thinks he is free, because he commands slaves: the meanest peasant in a free state is more free than he is. Oh, my Lord, that you—the brave, the generous, the enlightened—you, almost alone amidst your order, in the knowledge that we *had* a country—oh, would that you who can sympathise with our sufferings, would strike with us for their redress!”

“Thou wilt war against Stephen Colonna, my kinsman; and though I have seen him but little, nor, truth to say, esteem him much, yet he is the boast of our house,—how can I join thee?”

“His life will be safe, his possessions safe, his rank safe. What do we war against? His power to do wrong to others!”

“Should he discover that thou hast force beyond words, he would be less merciful to *thee*.”

“And has he not discovered that? Do not the shouts of the people tell him that I am a man whom he should fear? Does he, the cautious, the wily, the profound—does he build fortresses, and erect towers, and not see from his battlements the mighty fabric that I, too, have erected?”

“You! where, Rienzi?”

“In the hearts of Rome! Does he not see?” continued Rienzi. “No, no; he—all, all his tribe are blind. Is it not so?”

“Of a certainty, my kinsman has no belief in your power, else he would have crushed you long ere this. Nay, it was but three days ago that he said, gravely, he would rather *you* address the populace than the best priest in Christendom; for

that other orators inflamed the crowd, and no man so stilled and dispersed them as you did."

"And I called *him* profound! Does not Heaven hush the air most when most it prepares the storm? Ay, my Lord, I understand. Stephen Colonna despises me. I have been"—(here, as he continued, a deep blush mantled over his cheek)—"you remember it—at his palace in my younger days, and pleased him with witty tales and light apophthegms. Nay—ha! ha!—he would call me, I think, sometimes, in gay compliment, his jester, his buffoon! I have brooked his insult; I have even bowed to his applause. I would undergo the same penance, stoop to the same shame, for the same motive, and in the same cause. What did I desire to effect? Can you tell me? No! I will whisper it, then, to you: it was—the contempt of Stephen Colonna. Under that contempt I was protected, till protection became no longer necessary. I desired not to be thought formidable by the patricians, in order that, quietly and unsuspected, I might make my way amongst the people. I have done so: I now throw aside the mask. Face to face with Stephen Colonna, I could tell him, this very hour, that I brave his anger; that I laugh at his dungeons and armed men. But if he think me the same Rienzi as of old, let him; I can wait my hour."

"Yet," said Adrian, waiving an answer to the haughty language of his companion, "tell me, what dost thou ask for the people, in order to avoid an appeal to their passions? Ignorant and capricious as they are, thou canst not appeal to their reason."

"I ask full justice and safety for all men. I will be contented with no less a compromise. I ask the nobles to dismantle their fortresses; to disband their armed retainers; to acknowledge no impunity for crime in high lineage; to claim no protection save in the courts of the common law."

"Vain desire!" said Adrian. "Ask what may yet be granted."

"Ha—ha!" replied Rienzi, laughing bitterly, "did I not tell you it was a vain dream to ask for law and justice at the hands of the great? Can you blame me, then, that I ask it

elsewhere?" Then, suddenly changing his tone and manner, he added with great solemnity—"Waking life hath false and vain dreams; but sleep is sometimes a mighty prophet. By sleep it is that Heaven mysteriously communes with its creatures, and guides and sustains its earthly agents in the path to which its providence leads them on."

Adrian made no reply. This was not the first time he had noted that Rienzi's strong intellect was strangely conjoined with a deep and mystical superstition. And this yet more inclined the young noble, who, though sufficiently devout, yielded but little to the wilder credulities of the time, to doubt the success of the schemer's projects. In this he erred greatly, though his error was that of the worldly wise. For nothing ever so inspires human daring as the fond belief that it is the agent of a Diviner Wisdom. Revenge and patriotism, united in one man of genius and ambition—such are the Archimedian levers that find, in FANATICISM, the spot *out* of the world by which to move the world. The prudent man may direct a state; but it is the enthusiast who regenerates it,—or ruins.

CHAPTER IX.

"WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW THIS PICTURE EVERY ONE MARVELLED."

BEFORE the market-place, and at the foot of the Capitol, an immense crowd was assembled. Each man sought to push before his neighbour; each struggled to gain access to one particular spot, round which the crowd was wedged thick and dense.

"Corpo di Dio!" said a man of huge stature, pressing onward, like some bulky ship, casting the noisy waves right and left from its prow, "this is hot work; but for what, in the Holy Mother's name, do ye crowd so? See you not, Sir Ribald, that my right arm is disabled, swathed, and bandaged, so that I cannot help myself better than a baby? and yet, you push against me as if I were an old wall!"

"Ah, Cecco del Vecchio!—what, man! we must make way for you—you are too small and tender to bustle through a crowd! Come, I will protect you!" said a dwarf of some four feet high, glancing up at the giant.

"Faith," said the grim smith, looking round on the mob, who laughed loud at the dwarf's proffer, "we all do want protection, big and small. What do you laugh for, ye apes?—ay, you don't understand parables."

"And yet it is a parable we are come to gaze upon," said one of the mob, with a slight sneer.

"Pleasant day to you, Signor Baroncelli," answered Cecco del Vecchio; "you are a good man, and love the people; it makes one's heart smile to see you. What's all this pother for?"

"Why, the Pope's notary hath set up a great picture in the market-place, and the gapers say it relates to Rome; so they are melting their brains out, this hot day, to guess at the riddle."

"Ho! ho!" said the smith, pushing on so vigorously that he left the speaker suddenly in the rear; "if Cola di Rienzi hath aught in the matter, I would break through stone rocks to get to it."

"Much good will a dead daub do us," said Baroncelli, sourly, and turning to his neighbours; but no man listened to him, and he, a would-be demagogue, gnawed his lip in envy.

Amidst half-awed groans and curses from the men whom he jostled aside, and open objurgations and shrill cries from the women, to whose robes and head-gear he showed as little respect, the sturdy smith won his way to a space fenced round by chains, in the centre of which was placed a huge picture.

"How came it hither?" cried one; "I was first at the market."

"We found it here at daybreak," said a vendor of fruit; "no one was by."

"But why do you fancy Rienzi had a hand in it?"

"Why, who else could?" answered twenty voices.

"True! Who else?" echoed the gaunt smith. "I dare be sworn the good man spent the whole night in painting it himself. Blood of St. Peter! but it is mighty fine! What is it about?"

"That's the riddle," said a meditative fishwoman; "if I could make it out I should die happy."

"It is something about liberty and taxes, no dōubt," said Luigi, the butcher, leaning over the chains. "Ah, if Rienzi were minded, every poor man would have his bit of meat in his pot."

"And as much bread as he could eat," added a pale baker.

"Chut! bread and meat—everybody has that now!—but what wine the poor folks drink! One has no encouragement to take pains with one's vineyard," said a vinedresser.

"Ho, hollo!—long life to Pandulfo di Guido! make way for master Pandulfo; he is a learned man; he is a friend of the great notary's: he will tell us all about the picture; make way, there—make way!"

Slowly and modestly, Pandulfo di Guido, a quiet, wealthy, and honest man of letters, whom nought save the violence of the times could have roused from his tranquil home, or his studious closet, passed to the chains. He looked long and hard at the picture, which was bright with new, and yet moist colours, and exhibited somewhat of the reviving art, which, though hard and harsh in its features, was about that time visible, and, carried to a far higher degree, we yet gaze upon in the paintings of Perugino, who flourished during the succeeding generation. The people pressed round the learned man, with open mouths; now turning their eyes to the picture, now to Pandulfo.

"Know you not," at length said Pandulfo, "the easy and palpable meaning of this design? Behold how the painter has presented to you a vast and stormy sea—mark how its waves—"

"Speak louder—louder!" shouted the impatient crowd.

"Hush!" cried those in the immediate vicinity of Pandulfo, "the worthy Signor is perfectly audible."

Meanwhile, some of the more witty, pushing towards a stall in the market-place, bore from it a rough table, from which they besought Pandulfo to address the people. The pale citizen, with some pain and shame, for he was no practised spokesman, was obliged to assent; but when he cast his eyes over the vast and breathless crowd, his own deep sympathy with their cause inspired and emboldened him. A light broke from his eyes; his voice swelled into power; and his head, usually buried in his breast, became erect and commanding in its air.

"You see before you in the picture" (he began again) "a mighty and tempestuous sea: upon its waves you behold five ships; four of them are already wrecks,—their masts are broken, the waves are dashing through the rent planks, they are past all aid and hope: on each of these ships lies the corpse of a woman. See you not, in the wan face and livid limbs, how faithfully the limner hath painted the hues and loathsomeness of death? Below each of these ships is a word that applies the metaphor to truth. Yonder, you see the name of Carthage; the other three are Troy, Jerusalem, and Babylon. To these four is one common inscription. 'To exhaustion were we brought by injustice!' Turn now your eyes to the middle of the sea,—there you behold the fifth ship, tossed amidst the waves, her mast broken, her rudder gone, her sails shivered, but not yet a wreck like the rest, though she soon may be. On her deck kneels a female, clothed in mourning; mark the woe upon her countenance,—how cunningly the artist has conveyed its depth and desolation; she stretches out her arms in prayer, she implores your and Heaven's assistance. Mark now the superscription—'This is Rome!'—Yes, it is your country that addresses you in this emblem!"

The crowd waved to and fro, and a deep murmur crept gathering over the silence which they had hitherto kept.

"Now," continued Pandulfo, "turn your gaze to the right of the picture, and you will behold the cause of the tempest,—you will see why the fifth vessel is thus perilled, and her sisters are thus wrecked. Mark, four different kinds of animals, who, from their horrid jaws, send forth the winds and storms which torture and rack the sea. The first are the lions, the wolves, the bears. These, the inscription tells you, are the lawless and savage signors of the state. The next are the dogs and swine,—these are the evil counsellors and parasites. Thirdly, you behold the dragons and the foxes,—and these are false judges and notaries, and they who sell justice. Fourthly, in the hares, the goats, the apes, that assist in creating the storm, you perceive, by the inscription, the emblems of the popular thieves and homicides, ravishers and spoliators. Are ye bewildered still, O Romans! or have ye mastered the riddle of the picture?"

Far in their massive palaces the Savelli and Orsini heard the echo of the shouts that answered the question of Pandulfo.

"Are ye, then, without hope?" resumed the scholar, as the shout ceased, and hushing, with the first sound of his voice, the ejaculations and speeches which each man had turned to utter to his neighbour. "Are ye without hope? Doth the picture, which shows your tribulation, promise you no redemption? Behold, above that angry sea, the heavens open, and the majesty of God descends gloriously, as to judgment; and from the rays that surround the Spirit of God extend two flaming swords, and on those swords stand, in wrath, but in deliverance, the two patron saints—the two mighty guardians of your city! People of Rome, farewell! the parable is finished."¹

CHAPTER X.

A ROUGH SPIRIT RAISED, WHICH MAY HEREAFTER REND THE WIZARD.

WHILE thus animated was the scene around the Capitol, *within* one of the apartments of the palace sat the agent and prime cause of that excitement. In the company of his quiet scribes, Rienzi appeared absorbed in the patient details of his avocation. While the murmur and the hum, the shout and the tramp, of multitudes, rolled to his chamber, he seemed not to heed them, nor to rouse himself a moment from his task. With the unbroken regularity of an automaton, he continued to enter in his large book, and with the clear and beautiful characters of the period, those damning figures which taught him, better than declamations, the frauds practised on the people, and armed him with that weapon of plain fact which it is so difficult for abuse to parry.

¹ M. Sismondi attributes to Rienzi a fine oration at the showing of the picture, in which he thundered against the vices of the patricians. The contemporary biographer of Rienzi says nothing of this harangue. But, apparently (since history has its liberties as well as fiction), M. Sismondi has thought it convenient to confound two occasions very distinct in themselves.

"Page 2, Vol. B.," said he, in the tranquil voice of business, to the clerks; "see there, the profits of the salt duty; department No. 3—very well. Page 9, Vol. D.—what is the account rendered by Vescobaldi, the collector? What! twelve thousand florins?—no more?—unconscionable rascal!" (Here was a loud shout without of "Pandulfo!—long live Pandulfo!") "Pastrucci, my friend, your head wanders; you are listening to the noise without—please to amuse yourself with the calculation I entrusted to you. Santi, what is the entry given in by Antonio Tralli?"

A slight tap was heard at the door, and Pandulfo entered.

The clerks continued their labour, though they looked up hastily at the pale and respectable visitor, whose name, to their great astonishment, had thus become a popular cry.

"Ah, my friend," said Rienzi, calmly enough in voice, but his hands trembled with ill-suppressed emotion, "you would speak to me alone, eh? well, well,—this way." Thus saying, he led the citizen into a small cabinet in the rear of the room of office, carefully shut the door, and then giving himself up to the natural impatience of his character, seized Pandulfo by the hand: "Speak!" cried he: "do they take the interpretation?—have you made it plain and palpable enough?—has it sunk deep into their souls?"

"Oh, by St. Peter! yes!" returned the citizen, whose spirits were elevated by his recent discovery that he, too, was an orator—a luxurious pleasure for a timid man. "They swallowed every word of the interpretation; they are moved to the marrow—you might lead them this very hour to battle, and find them heroes. As for the sturdy smith—"

"What! Cecco del Vecchio?" interrupted Rienzi; "ah, his heart is wrought in bronze—what did he?"

"Why, he caught me by the hem of my robe as I descended my rostrum (oh! would you could have seen me!—*per fede* I had caught your mantle!—I was a second *you*!) and said, weeping like a child, 'Ah, Signor, I am but a poor man, and of little worth; but if every drop of blood in this body were a life, I would give it for my country!'"

"Brave soul," said Rienzi, with emotion; "would Rome had

but fifty such ! No man hath done **us** more good among his own class than Cecco del Vecchio."

"They feel a protection in his very size," said Pandulfo. "It is something to hear such big words from such a big fellow."

"Were there *any* voices lifted in disapprobation of the picture and its sentiment ?"

"None."

"The time is nearly ripe, then—a few suns more, and the fruit must be gathered. The Aventine,—the Lateran,—and then *the solitary trumpet !*" Thus saying, Rienzi, with folded arms and downcast eyes, seemed sunk into a reverie.

"By the way," said Pandulfo, "I had almost forgot to tell thee that the crowd would have poured themselves hither, so impatient were they to see thee ; but I bade Cecco del Vecchio mount the rostrum, and tell them, in his blunt way, that it would be unseemly at the present time, when thou wert engaged in the Capitol on civil and holy affairs, to rush in so great a body into thy presence. Did I not right ?"

"Most right, my Pandulfo."

"But Cecco del Vecchio says he must come and kiss thy hand : and thou mayest expect him here the moment he can escape unobserved from the crowd."

"He is welcome !" said Rienzi, half mechanically, for he was still absorbed in thought.

"And lo ! here he is,"—as one of the scribes announced the visit of the smith.

"Let him be admitted !" said Rienzi, seating himself composedly.

When the huge smith found himself in the presence of Rienzi, it amused Pandulfo to perceive the wonderful influences of mind over matter. That fierce and sturdy giant, who, in all popular commotions towered above his tribe, with thews of stone and nerves of iron, the rallying point and bulwark of the rest,—stood now colouring and trembling before the intellect, which (so had the eloquent spirit of Rienzi waked and fanned the spark which, till then, had lain dormant in that rough bosom) might almost be said to have created his own. And he, indeed, who first arouses in the bondsman the sense and soul of freedom, comes as near

as is permitted to man, nearer than the philosopher, nearer even than the poet, to the great creative attribute of God ! But, if the breast be uneducated, the gift may curse the giver; and he who passes at once from the slave to the freeman may pass as rapidly from the freeman to the ruffian.

“ Approach, my friend,” said Rienzi, after a moment’s pause; “ I know all that thou hast done, and wouldst do, for Rome ! Thou art worthy of her best days, and thou art born to share in their return.”

The smith dropped at the feet of Rienzi, who held out his hand to raise him, which Cecco del Vecchio seized and reverentially kissed.

“ This kiss does not betray,” said Rienzi, smiling ; “ but rise, my friend,—this posture is only due to God and His saints ! ”

“ He is a saint who helps us at need ! ” said the smith, bluntly, “ and that no man has done as thou hast. But when,” he added, sinking his voice, and fixing his eyes hard on Rienzi, as one may do who waits a signal to strike a blow, “ when—when shall we make the great effort ? ”

“ Thou hast spoken to all the brave men in thy neighbourhood,—are they well prepared ? ”

“ To live or die, as Rienzi bids them ! ”

“ I must have the list—the number—names—houses and callings, this night.”

“ Thou shalt.”

“ Each man must sign his name or mark with his own hand.”

“ It shall be done.”

“ Then, hark ye ! attend Pandulfo di Guido at his house this evening at sunset. He shall instruct thee where to meet this night some brave hearts;—thou art worthy to be ranked amongst them. Thou wilt not fail ? ”

“ By the Holy Stairs ! I will count every minute till then,” said the smith, his swarthy face lighted with pride at the confidence shown him.

“ Meanwhile, watch all your neighbours ; let no man flag or grow faint-hearted,—none of thy friends must be branded as a traitor ! ”

"I will cut his throat, were he my own mother's son, if I find one pledged man flinch!" said the fierce smith.

"Ha, ha!" rejoined Rienzi, with that strange laugh which belonged to him; "a miracle! a miracle! The Picture speaks now!"

It was already nearly dusk when Rienzi left the Capitol. The broad space before its walls was empty and deserted, and wrapping his mantle closely round him, he walked musingly on.

"I have almost climbed the height," thought he, "and now the precipice yawns before me. If I fail, what a fall! The last hope of my country falls with me. Never will a noble rise against the nobles. Never will another plebeian have the opportunities and the power that I have! Rome is bound up with me—with a single life. The liberties of all time are fixed to a reed that a wind may uproot. But oh, Providence! hast thou not reserved and marked me for great deeds? How, step by step, have I been led on to this solemn enterprise! How has each hour prepared its successor! And yet what danger! *If* the inconstant people, made cowardly by long thralldom, do but waver in the crisis, I am swept away!"

As he spoke, he raised his eyes, and lo, before him, the first star of twilight shone calmly down upon the crumbling remnants of the Tarpeian Rock. It was no favouring omen, and Rienzi's heart beat quicker as that dark and ruined mass frowned thus suddenly on his gaze.

"Dread monument," thought he, "of what dark catastrophes, to what unknown schemes, hast thou been the witness! To how many enterprises, on which history is dumb, hast thou set the seal! How know we whether they were criminal or just? How know we whether he, thus doomed as a traitor, would not, if successful, have been immortalized as a deliverer? If I fall, who will write my chronicle? One of the people? alas! blinded and ignorant, they furnish forth no minds that can appeal to posterity. One of the patricians? in what colours then shall I be painted! No tomb will rise for me amidst the wrecks; no hand scatter flowers upon my grave!"

Thus meditating on the verge of that mighty enterprise to

which he had devoted himself, Rienzi pursued his way. He gained the Tiber, and paused for a few moments beside its legendary stream, over which the purple and star-lit heaven shone deeply down. He crossed the bridge which leads to the quarter of the Trastevere, whose haughty inhabitants yet boast themselves the sole descendants of the ancient Romans. Here his step grew quicker and more light; brighter, if less solemn, thoughts crowded upon his breast; and ambition lulled for a moment, left his strained and over-laboured mind to the reign of a softer passion.

CHAPTER XI.

NINA DI RASELLI

"I TELL you, Lucia, I do not love those stuffs; they do not become me. Saw you ever so poor a dye?—this purple, indeed that crimson! Why did you let the man leave them? Let him take them elsewhere to-morrow. They may suit the signoras on the other side the Tiber, who imagine everything Venetian must be perfect; but I, Lucia, I see with my own eyes, and judge from my own mind."

"Ah, dear lady," said the serving-maid, "if you were, as you doubtless will be, some time or other, a grand signora, how worthily you would wear the honours! Santa Cecilia! no other dame in Rome would be looked at while the Lady Nina were by!"

"Would we not teach them what pomp was?" answered Nina. "Oh! what festivals would we hold! Saw you not from the gallery the revels given last week by the Lady Giulia Savelli?"

"Ay, Signora; and when you walked up the hall in your silver and pearl tissue, there ran such a murmur through the gallery; every one cried, 'The Savelli have entertained an angel!'"

"Pish! Lucia; no flattery, girl."

"It is naked truth, lady. But that *was* a revel, was it not? There was grandeur!—fifty servitors in scarlet and gold! and

the music playing all the while. The minstrels were sent for from Bergamo. Did not that festival please you? Ah, I warrant many were the fine speeches made to you that day!"

"Heigho!—no, there was one voice wanting, and all the music was marred. But, girl, were I the Lady Giulia, I would not have been contented with so poor a revel."

"How, poor! Why all the nobles say it outdid the proudest marriage-feast of the Colonna. Nay, a Neapolitan who sat next me, who had served under the young Queen Joanna, at her marriage, says, that even Naples was outshone."

"That may be. I know naught of Naples; but I know what *my* court should have been, were I what—what I am not, and may never be! The banquet vessels should have been of gold; the cups jewelled to the brim; not an inch of the rude pavement should have been visible; all should have glowed with cloth of gold. The fountain in the court should have showered up the perfumes of the East! my pages should not have been rough youths, blushing at their own uncouthness, but fair boys, who had not told their twelfth year, culled from the daintiest palaces of Rome: and, as for the music, oh, Lucia!—each musician should have worn a chaplet, and deserved it; and he who played best should have had a reward, to inspire all the rest—a rose from me. Saw you, too, the Lady Giulia's robe? What colours! they might have put out the sun at noonday!—yellow, and blue, and orange, and scarlet! Oh, sweet Saints!—but my eyes ached all the next day!"

"Doubtless, the Lady Giulia lacks your skill in the mixture of colours," said the complaisant waiting-woman.

"And then, too, what a mien!—no royalty in it! She moved along the hall so that her train well-nigh tripped her every moment; and then she said, with a foolish laugh, 'These holiday robes are but troublesome luxuries.' Troth, for the great there should be no holiday robes; 'tis for myself, not for others, that I would attire! Every day should have its new robe, more gorgeous than the last;—every day should be a holiday!"

"Methought," said Lucia, "that the Lord Giovanni Orsini seemed very devoted to my Lady."

"He! the bear!"

"Bear he may be, but he has a costly skin. His riches are untold."

"And the fool knows not how to spend them."

"Was not that the young Lord Adrian who spoke to you just by the columns, where the music played?"

"It might be,—I forget."

"Yet, I hear that few ladies forget when Lord Adrian di Castello woos them."

"There was but one man whose company seemed to me worth the recollection," answered Nina, unheeding the insinuation of the artful handmaid.

"And who was he?" asked Lucia.

"The old scholar from Avignon."

"What! he with the grey beard? Oh, Signora!"

"Yes," said Nina, with a grave and sad voice; "when he spoke, the whole scene vanished from my eyes,—for he spoke to me of HIM!"

As she said this the Signora sighed deeply, and the tears gathered to her eyes.

The waiting-woman raised her lips in disdain, and her looks in wonder; but she did not dare to venture a reply.

"Open the lattice," said Nina, after a pause, "and give me yon paper. Not that, girl—but the verses sent me yesterday. What! art thou Italian, and dost thou not know, by instinct, that I spoke of the rhyme of Petrarch?"

Seated by the open casement, through which the moonlight stole soft and sheen, with one lamp beside her, from which she seemed to shade her eyes, though in reality she sought to hide her countenance from Lucia, the young Signora appeared absorbed in one of those tender sonnets which then turned the brains and inflamed the hearts of Italy.¹

Born of an impoverished house, which, though boasting its descent from a consular race of Rome, scarcely at that day maintained a rank amongst the inferior order of nobility, Nina

¹ Although it is true that the love sonnets of Petrarch were not then, as now, the most esteemed of his works, yet it has been a great, though a common error, to represent them as little known and coldly admired. Their effect was, in reality, prodigious and universal. Every ballad-singer sang them in the streets (says Filippo Villani), "*Gravissimi nesciebant abstinere*"—"Even the gravest could not abstain from them."

di Raselli was the spoiled child—the idol and the tyrant—of her parents. The energetic and self-willed character of her mind made her rule where she should have obeyed ; and as in all ages dispositions can conquer custom, she had, though in a clime and land where the young and unmarried of her sex are usually chained and fettered, assumed, and by assuming won, the prerogative of independence. She possessed, it is true, more learning and more genius than generally fell to the share of women in that day ; and enough of both to be deemed a miracle by her parents ;—she had, also, what they valued more, a surpassing beauty ; and, what they feared more, an indomitable haughtiness ;—a haughtiness mixed with a thousand soft and endearing qualities where she loved ; and which, indeed, where she loved, seemed to vanish. At once vain yet high-minded, resolute yet impassioned, there was a gorgeous magnificence in her very vanity and splendour,—an ideality in her waywardness : her defects made a part of her brilliancy ; without them she would have seemed less woman ; and, knowing her, you would have compared all women by her standard. Softer qualities beside her seemed not more charming, but more insipid. She had no vulgar ambition, for she had obstinately refused many alliances which the daughter of Raselli could scarcely have hoped to form. The untutored minds and savage power of the Roman nobles seemed to her imagination, which was full of the *poetry* of rank, its luxury and its graces, as something barbarous and revolting, at once to be dreaded and despised. She had, therefore, passed her twentieth year unmarried, but not without love. The faults, themselves, of her character, elevated that ideal of love which she had formed. She required some being round whom all her vainer qualities could rally ; she felt that where she loved she must adore : she demanded no common idol before which to humble so strong and imperious a mind. Unlike women of a gentler mould, who desire, for a short period, to exercise the caprices of sweet empire,—when she loved she must cease to command ; and pride at once be humbled to devotion. So rare were the qualities that could attract her ; so imperiously did her haughtiness require that those qualities should be above her own, yet of the same order ; that her love elevated its object like a

god. Accustomed to despise, she felt all the luxury it is to venerate! And if it were her lot to be united with one thus loved, her nature was that which might become elevated by the nature that it gazed on. For her beauty—Reader, shouldst thou ever go to Rome, thou wilt see in the Capitol the picture of the Cumæan Sibyl, which, often copied, no copy can even faintly represent. I beseech thee, mistake not this sibyl for another, for the Roman galleries abound in sibyls.¹ The sibyl I speak of is dark, and the face has an Eastern cast; the robe and turban, gorgeous though they be, grow dim before the rich, but transparent roses of the cheek; the hair would be black, save for that golden glow which mellows it to a hue and lustre never seen but in the south, and even in the south most rare; the features, not Grecian, are yet faultless; the mouth, the brow, the ripe and exquisite contour, all are human and voluptuous; the expression, the aspect, is something more; the form is, perhaps, too full for the perfection of loveliness, for the proportions of sculpture, for the delicacy of Athenian models; but the luxuriant fault has a majesty. Gaze long upon that picture: it charms, yet commands, the eye. While you gaze, you call back five centuries. You see before you the breathing image of Nina di Raselli!

But it was not those ingenious and elaborate conceits in which Petrarch, great Poet though he be, has so often mistaken pedantry for passion, that absorbed at that moment the attention of the beautiful Nina. Her eyes rested not on the page, but on the garden that stretched below the casement. Over the old fruit-trees and hanging vines fell the moonshine; and in the centre of the green but half-neglected sward, the waters of a small and circular fountain, whose perfect proportions spoke of days long past, played and sparkled in the starlight. The scene was still and beautiful; but neither of its stillness nor its beauty thought Nina: towards one, the gloomiest and most rugged spot in the whole garden, turned her gaze; there, the trees stood densely massed together, and shut from view the low but heavy

¹ The sibyl referred to is the well-known one by Domenichino. As a mere work of art, that by Guercino, called the Persian sibyl, in the same collection, is perhaps superior; but in beauty, in character there is no comparison.

wall which encircled the mansion of Raselli. The boughs on those trees stirred gently, but Nina saw them wave; and now from the copse emerged, slowly and cautiously, a solitary figure, whose shadow threw itself, long and dark, over the sward. It approached the window, and a low voice breathed Nina's name.

"Quick, Lucia!" cried she, breathlessly, turning to her handmaid: "quick! the rope-ladder! it is he! he is come! How slow you are! haste, girl,—he may be discovered! There,—O joy,—O joy!—My lover! my hero! my Rienzi!"

"It is you!" said Rienzi, as, now entering the chamber, he wound his arms around her half-averted form, "and what is night to others is day to me!"

The first sweet moments of welcome were over; and Rienzi was seated at the feet of his mistress: his head rested on her knees—his face looking up to hers—their hands clasped each in each.

"And for me thou bravest these dangers!" said the lover; "the shame of discovery, the wrath of thy parents!"

"But what are my perils to thine? Oh, Heaven! if my father found thee here thou wouldst die!"

"He would think it then so great a humiliation that thou, beautiful Nina, who mightst match with the haughtiest names of Rome, shouldst waste thy love on a plebeian—even though the grandson of an emperor!"

The proud heart of Nina could sympathise well with the wounded pride of her lover: she detected the soreness which lurked beneath his answer, carelessly as it was uttered.

"Hast thou not told me," she said, "of that great Marius, who was no noble, but from whom the loftiest Colonna would rejoice to claim his descent? and do I not know in thee one who shall yet eclipse the power of Marius, unsullied by his vices?"

"Delicious flattery! sweet prophet!" said Rienzi, with a melancholy smile; "never were thy supporting promises of the future more welcome to me than now; for to thee I will say what I would utter to none else—my soul half sinks beneath the mighty burthen I have heaped upon it. I want new courage as the dread hour approaches; and from thy words and looks I drink it."

"Oh!" answered Nina, blushing as she spoke, "glorious is indeed the lot which I have bought by my love for thee: glorious to share thy schemes, to cheer thee in doubt, to whisper hope to thee in danger."

"And give grace to me in triumph!" added Rienzi, passionately. "Ah! should the future ever place upon these brows the laurel-wreath due to one who has saved his country, what joy, what recompense, to lay it at thy feet! Perhaps, in those long and solitary hours of languor and exhaustion which fill up the interstices of time,—the dull space for sober thought between the epochs of exciting action,—perhaps I should have failed and flagged, and renounced even my dreams for Rome, had they not been linked also with my dreams for thee!—had I not pictured to myself the hour when my fate should elevate me beyond my birth; when thy sire would deem it no disgrace to give thee to my arms; when thou, too, shouldst stand amidst the dames of Rome, more honoured, as more beautiful, than all; and when I should see that pomp, which my own soul disdains,¹ made dear and grateful to me because associated with thee! Yes, it is these thoughts that have inspired me, when sterner ones have shrunk back appalled from the spectres that surround their goal. And oh! my Nina, sacred, strong, enduring must be, indeed, the love which lives in the same pure and elevated air as that which sustains my hopes of liberty and fame!"

This was the language which, more even than the vows of fidelity and the dear adulation which springs from the heart's exuberance, had bound the proud and vain soul of Nina to the chains that it so willingly wore. Perhaps, indeed, in the absence of Rienzi, her weaker nature pictured to herself the triumph of humbling the high-born signoras, and eclipsing the barbarous magnificence of the chiefs of Rome; but in his presence, and listening to his more elevated and generous ambition, as yet all unsullied by one private feeling save the hope of her, her higher sympathies were enlisted with his schemes, her mind aspired to raise itself to the height of his, and she thought less of her own

¹ "*Quem semper abhorruī sicut cenū*" is the expression used by Rienzi, in his letter to his friend at Avignon, and which was probably sincere. Men rarely act according to the bias of their own tastes.

rise than of his glory. It was sweet to her pride to be the sole confidante of his most secret thoughts, as of his most hardy undertakings; to see bared before her that intricate and plotting spirit; to be admitted even to the knowledge of its doubts and weakness, as of its heroism and power.

Nothing could be more contrasted than the loves of Rienzi and Nina, and those of Adrian and Irene: in the latter all were the dreams, the phantasies, the extravagance, of youth; they never talked of the future; they mingled no other aspirations with those of love. Ambition, glory, the world's high objects, were nothing to them when together; their love had swallowed up the world, and left nothing visible beneath the sun, save itself. But the passion of Nina and *her* lover was that of more complicated natures and more mature years: it was made up of a thousand feelings, each naturally severed from each, but compelled into one focus by the mighty concentration of love; their talk was of the world; it was from the world that they drew the aliment which sustained it; it was of the future they spoke and thought; of its dreams and imagined glories they made themselves a home and altar; their love had in it more of the Intellectual than that of Adrian and Irene; it was more fitted for this hard earth; it had in it, also, more of the leaven of the later and iron days, and less of poetry and the first golden age.

"And must thou leave me now?" said Nina, her cheek no more averted from his lips, nor her form from his parting embrace. "The moon is high yet; it is but a little hour thou hast given me."

"An hour! Alas!" said Rienzi, "**it is near upon midnight—our friends await me.**"

"Go, then, my soul's best half! go; Nina shall not detain thee one moment from those higher objects which make thee so dear to Nina. When—when shall we meet again?"

"Not," said Rienzi, proudly, and with all his soul upon his brow, "not thus, by stealth! no! nor as I thus have met thee, the obscure and contemned bondsman! When next thou seest me, it shall be at the head of the sons of Rome! her champion! her restorer! **or——**" said he, sinking his voice—

"There is no *or*!" interrupted Nina, weaving her arms round him, and catching his enthusiasm; "thou hast uttered thine own destiny!"

"One kiss more!—farewell!—the tenth day from the morrow shines upon the restoration of Rome!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES THAT BEFELL WALTER DE MONTREAL.

IT was upon that same evening, and while the earlier stars yet shone over the city, that Walter de Montreal, returning, alone, to the convent then associated with the church of Santa Maria del Priorata (both of which belonged to the Knights of the Hospital, and in the first of which Montreal had taken his lodgment), paused amidst the ruins and desolation which lay around his path. Though little skilled in the classic memories and associations of the spot, he could not but be impressed with the surrounding witnesses of departed empire; the vast skeleton, as it were, of the dead giantess.

"Now," thought he, as he gazed around upon the roofless columns and shattered walls, everywhere visible, over which the starlight shone, ghastly and transparent, backed by the frowning and embattled fortresses of the Frangipani, half hid by the dark foliage that sprung up amidst the very fanes and palaces of old—Nature exulting over the frailer Art; "now," thought he, "bookmen would be inspired, by this scene, with fantastic and dreaming visions of the past. But to me these monuments of high ambition and royal splendour create only images of the future. Rome may yet be, with her seven-hilled diadem, as Rome has been before, the prize of the strongest hand and the boldest warrior,—revived, not by her own degenerate sons, but the infused blood of a new race. William the Bastard could scarce have found the hardy Englishers so easy a conquest as Walter the Well-born may find these eunuch Romans. And which conquest were the more glorious,—the

barbarous Isle, or the Metropolis of the World? Short step from the general to the podesta—shorter step from the podesta to the king!”

While thus revolving his wild, yet not altogether chimerical ambition, a quick light step was heard amidst the long herbage, and, looking up, Montreal perceived the figure of a tall female descending from that part of the hill then covered by many convents, towards the base of the Aventine. She supported her steps with a long staff, and moved with such elasticity and erectness, that now, as her face became visible by the starlight, it was surprising to perceive that it was the face of one advanced in years,—a harsh, proud countenance, withered, and deeply wrinkled, but not without a certain regularity of outline.

“Merciful Virgin!” cried Montreal, starting back as that face gleamed upon him: “is it possible? It is she—it is——”

He sprang forward, and stood right before the old woman, who seemed equally surprised, though more dismayed, at the sight of Montreal.

“I have sought thee for years,” said the Knight, first breaking the silence; “years, long years,—thy conscience can tell thee why.”

“*Mine*, man of blood!” cried the female, trembling with rage or fear; “darest *thou* talk of conscience? *Thou*, the dishonourer—the robber—the professed homicide! *Thou*, disgrace to knight-hood and to birth! *Thou*, with the cross of chastity and of peace upon thy breast! *Thou* talk of conscience, hypocrite!—*thou*?”

“Lady—lady!” said Montreal, deprecatingly, and almost quailing beneath the fiery passion of that feeble woman, “I have sinned against thee and thine. But remember all my excuses!—early love—fatal obstacles—rash vow—irresistible temptation! Perhaps,” he added, in a more haughty tone, “perhaps, yet I may have the power to atone my error, and wring, with mailed hand, from the successor of St. Peter, who hath power to loose as to bind——”

“Perjured and abandoned!” interrupted the female; “dost thou dream that violence can purchase absolution, or that thou

canst ever atone the past? a noble name disgraced, a father's broken heart and dying curse! Yes, that curse, I hear it now! it rings upon me thrillingly, as when I watched the expiring clay! it cleaves to thee—it pursues thee—it shall pierce thee through thy corselet—it shall smite thee in the meridian of thy power! Genius wasted—ambition blasted—penitence deferred—a life of brawls, and a death of shame—thy destruction the offspring of thy crime!—To this, to this, an old man's curse hath doomed thee!—AND THOU ART DOOMED!”

These words were rather shrieked than spoken: and the flashing eye, the lifted hand, the dilated form of the speaker—the hour—the solitude of the ruins around—all conspired to give to the fearful execration the character of prophecy. The warrior, against whose undaunted breast a hundred spears had shivered in vain, fell appalled and humbled to the ground. He seized the hem of his fierce denouncer's robe, and cried, in a choked and hollow voice, “Spare me! spare me!”

“Spare thee!” said the unrelenting crone; “hast *thou* ever spared man in thy hatred, or woman in thy lust? Ah, grovel in the dust!—crouch—crouch!—wild beast as thou art; whose sleek skin and beautiful hues have taught the unwary to be blind to the talons that rend, and the grinders that devour;—crouch, that the foot of the old and impotent may spurn thee!”

“Hag!” cried Montreal, in the reaction of sudden fury and maddened pride, springing up to the full height of his stature. “Hag! thou hast passed the limits to which, remembering who thou art, my forbearance gave thee licence. I had well-nigh forgot that thou hadst assumed my part—I am the Accuser! Woman!—the boy!—shrink not! equivocate not! lie not!—thou wert the thief!”

“I was. Thou taughtest me the lesson how to steal a——”

“Render—restore him!” interrupted Montreal, stamping on the ground with such force that the splinters of the marble fragments on which he stood shivered under his armed heel.

The woman little heeded a violence at which the fiercest warrior of Italy might have trembled; but she did not make an immediate answer. The character of her countenance altered from passion into an expression of grave, intent, and melancholy

thought. At length she replied to Montreal; whose hand had wandered to his dagger-hilt, with the instinct of long habit, whenever enraged or thwarted, rather than from any design of blood which, stern and vindictive as he was, he would have been incapable of forming against any woman,—much less against the one then before him.

“Walter de Montreal,” said she, in a voice so calm that it almost sounded like that of compassion, “the boy, I think, has never known brother or sister: the only child of a once haughty and lordly race, on both sides, though now on both dishonoured—nay, why so impatient? thou wilt soon learn the worst—the boy is dead!”

“Dead!” repeated Montreal, recoiling and growing pale; “dead!—no, no—say not that! He has a mother,—you know he has!—a fond, meek-hearted, anxious, hoping mother!—no!—no, he is not dead!”

“Thou canst feel then, for a mother?” said the old woman, seemingly touched by the tone of the Provençal. “Yet, bethink thee; is it not better that the grave should save him from a life of riot, of bloodshed, and of crime? Better to sleep with God than to wake with the fiends!”

“Dead?” echoed Montreal; “dead!—the pretty one!—so young!—those eyes—the mother’s eyes—closed so soon?”

“Hast thou aught else to say? Thy sight scares my very womanhood from my soul!—let me be gone.”

“Dead!—may I believe thee? or dost thou mock me? Thou hast uttered *thy* curse, hearken to *my* warning:—If thou hast lied in this, thy last hour shall dismay thee, and thy death-bed shall be the death-bed of despair!”

“Thy lips,” replied the female, with a scornful smile, “are better adapted for lewd vows to unhappy maidens, than for the denunciations which sound solemn only when coming from the good. Farewell!”

“Stay! inexorable woman! stay!—where sleeps he? Masses shall be sung! priests shall pray!—the sins of the father shall not be visited on that young head!”

“At Florence!” returned the woman, hastily. “But no stone records the departed one!—The dead boy had no name!”

Waiting for no further questionings, the woman now passed on,—pursued her way;—and the long herbage, and the winding descent, soon snatched her ill-omened apparition from the desolate landscape.

Montreal, thus alone, sank with a deep and heavy sigh upon the ground, covered his face with his hands, and burst into an agony of grief; his chest heaved, his whole frame trembled, and he wept and sobbed aloud, with all the fearful vehemence of a man whose passions are strong and fierce, but to whom the violence of grief alone is novel and unfamiliar.

He remained thus, prostrate and unmanned, for a considerable time, growing slowly and gradually more calm as tears relieved his emotion; and, at length, rather indulging a gloomy reverie than a passionate grief. The moon was high and the hour late when he arose, and then few traces of the past excitement remained upon his countenance; for Walter de Montreal was not of that mould in which woe can force a settlement, or to which any affliction can bring the continued and habitual melancholy that darkens those who feel more enduringly, though with emotions less stormy. His were the elements of the true Frank character, though carried to excess: his sternest and his deepest qualities were mingled with fickleness and caprice; his profound sagacity often frustrated by a whim; his towering ambition deserted for some frivolous temptation; and his elastic, sanguine, and high-spirited nature, faithful only to the desire of military glory, to the poetry of a daring and stormy life, and to the susceptibilities of that tender passion without whose colourings no portrait of chivalry is complete, and in which he was capable of a sentiment, a tenderness, and a loyal devotion, which could hardly have been supposed compatible with his reckless levity and his undisciplined career.

“Well,” said he, as he rose slowly, folded his mantle round him, and resumed his way, “it was not for *myself* I grieved thus. But the pang is past, and the worst is known. Now, then, back to those things that never die—restless projects and daring schemes. That hag’s curse keeps my blood cold still, and this solitude has something in it weird and awful. Ha!—what sudden light is that?”

The light which caught Montreal's eye broke forth almost like a star, scarcely larger, indeed, but more red and intense in its ray. Of itself it was nothing uncommon, and might have shone either from convent or cottage. But it streamed from a part of the Aventine which contained no habitations of the living, but only the empty ruins and shattered porticoes, of which even the names and memories of the ancient inhabitants were dead. Aware of this, Montreal felt a slight awe (as the beam threw its steady light over the dreary landscape); for he was not without the knightly superstitions of the age, and it was now the witching hour consecrated to ghost and spirit. But fear, whether of this world or the next, could not long daunt the mind of the hardy freebooter; and, after a short hesitation, he resolved to make a digression from his way, and ascertain the cause of the phenomenon. Unconsciously, the martial tread of the barbarian passed over the site of the famed, or infamous temple of Isis, which had once witnessed those wildest orgies commemorated by Juvenal; and came at last to a thick and dark copse, from an opening in the centre of which gleamed the mysterious light. Penetrating the gloomy foliage, the Knight now found himself before a large ruin, grey and roofless, from within which came, indistinct and muffled, the sound of voices. Through a rent in the wall, forming a kind of casement, and about ten feet from the ground, the light now broke over the matted and rank soil, embedded, as it were, in vast masses of shade, and streaming through a mouldering portico hard at hand. The Provençal stood, though he knew it not, on the very place once consecrated by the Temple: the Portico and the Library of Liberty (the first public library instituted in Rome). The wall of the ruin was covered with innumerable creepers and wild brushwood, and it required but little agility on the part of Montreal, by the help of these, to raise himself to the height of the aperture, and, concealed by the luxuriant foliage, to gaze within. He saw a table, lighted with tapers, in the centre of which was a crucifix; a dagger, unsheathed; an open scroll, which the event proved to be of sacred character; and a brazen bowl. About a hundred men, in cloaks, and with black vizards, stood motionless around; and

one, taller than the rest, without disguise or mask—whose pale brow and stern features seemed by that light yet paler and yet more stern—appeared to be concluding some address to his companions.

“Yes,” said he, “in the church of the Lateran I will make the last appeal to the people. Supported by the Vicar of the Pope, myself an officer of the Pontiff, it will be seen that Religion and Liberty—the heroes and the martyrs—are united in one cause. After that time, words are idle; action must begin. By this crucifix I pledge my faith, on this blade I devote my life, to the regeneration of Rome! And you (then no need for mask or mantle!), when the solitary trump is heard, when the solitary horseman is seen,—*you*, swear to rally round the standard of the Republic, and resist—with heart and hand, with life and soul, in defiance of death, and in hope of redemption—the arms of the oppressor!”

“We swear—we swear!” exclaimed every voice: and, crowding toward cross and weapon, the tapers were obscured by the intervening throng, and Montreal could not perceive the ceremony, nor hear the muttered formula of the oath: but he could guess that the rite then common to conspiracies—and which required each conspirator to shed some drops of his own blood, in token that life itself was devoted to the enterprise—had not been omitted, when, the group again receding, the same figure as before had addressed the meeting, holding on high the bowl with both hands,—while from the left arm, which was bared, the blood weltered slowly, and trickled, drop by drop, upon the ground,—said, in a solemn voice and upturned eyes:

“Amidst the ruins of thy temple, O Liberty! we, Romans, dedicate to thee this libation! We, befriended and inspired by no unreal and fabled idols, but by the Lord of Hosts, and Him who, descending to earth, appealed not to emperors and to princes, but to the fisherman and the peasant,—giving to the lowly and the poor the mission of Revelation.” Then, turning suddenly to his companions as his features, singularly varying in their character and expression, brightened, from solemn awe, into a martial and kindling enthusiasm, he cried

aloud, "Death to the Tyranny! Life to the Republic!" The effect of the transition was startling. Each man, as by an involuntary and irresistible impulse, laid his hand upon his sword, as he echoed the sentiment; some, indeed, drew forth their blades, as if for instant action.

"I have seen enow: they will break up anon," said Montreal to himself: "and I would rather face an army of thousands, than even half-a-dozen enthusiasts, so inflamed,—and I thus detected." And, with this thought, he dropped on the ground, and glided away, as, once again, through the still midnight air, broke upon his ear the muffled shout—"DEATH TO THE TYRANNY!—LIFE TO THE REPUBLIC!"

BOOK II.

THE REVOLUTION.

Ogni lascivia, ogni male, nulla giustizia, nullo freno. Non c'era piu remedia, ogni persona periva. Allora Cola di Rienzi, &c.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. chap. 2.

Every kind of lewdness, every form of evil; no justice, no restraint. Remedy there was none; perdition fell on all. Then Cola di Rienzi, &c.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE KNIGHT OF PROVENCE, AND HIS PROPOSAL.

IT was nearly noon as Adrian entered the gates of the palace of Stephen Colonna. The palaces of the nobles were not then, as we see them now, receptacles for the immortal canvas of Italian, and the imperishable sculpture of Grecian Art; but still to this day are retained the massive walls, and barred windows, and spacious courts, which at that time protected their rude retainers. High above the gates rose a lofty and solid tower, whose height commanded a wide view of the mutilated remains of Rome: the gate itself was adorned and strengthened on either side by columns of granite, whose Doric capitals betrayed the sacrilege that had torn them from one of the many temples that had formerly crowded the sacred Forum. From the same spoils came, too, the vast fragments of travertine which made the walls of the outer court. So common at that day were these barbarous appropriations of the most precious monuments of art, that the

columns and domes of earlier Rome were regarded by all classes but as quarries, from which every man was free to gather the materials, whether for his castle or his cottage,—a wantonness of outrage far greater than the Goths', to whom a later age would fain have attributed all the disgrace, and which, more perhaps than even heavier offences, excited the classical indignation of Petrarch, and made him sympathize with Rienzi in his hopes of Rome. Still may you see the churches of that or even earlier dates, of the most shapeless architecture, built on the sites, and from the marbles, consecrating (rather than consecrated by) the names of Venus, of Jupiter, of Minerva. The palace of the Prince of the Orsini, Duke of Gravina, is yet reared above the graceful arches (still visible) of the theatre of Marcellus; then a fortress of the Savelli.

As Adrian passed the court, a heavy waggon blocked up the way, laden with huge marbles, dug from the unexhausted mine of the Golden House of Nero: they were intended for an additional tower, by which Stephen Colonna proposed yet more to strengthen the tasteless and barbarous edifice in which the old noble maintained the dignity of outraging the law.

The friend of Petrarch and the pupil of Rienzi sighed deeply as he passed this vehicle of new spoliations, and as a pillar of fluted alabaster, rolling carelessly from the waggon, fell with a loud crash upon the pavement. At the foot of the stairs grouped some dozen of the bandits whom the old Colonna entertained. They were playing at dice upon an ancient tomb, the clear and deep inscription on which (so different from the slovenly character of the later empire) bespoke it a memorial of the most powerful age of Rome, and which, now empty even of ashes, and upset, served for a table to these foreign savages, and was strewn, even at that early hour, with fragments of meat and flasks of wine. They scarcely stirred, they scarcely looked up, as the young noble passed them; and their fierce oaths and loud ejaculations, uttered in a northern *patois*, grated harshly upon his ear, as he mounted, with a slow step, the lofty and unclean stairs. He came into a vast ante-chamber, which was half-filled with the higher class of the patrician's retainers: some **five or six** pages, chosen from the inferior *noblesse*,

congregated by a narrow and deep-sunk casement, were discussing the grave matters of gallantry and intrigue; three petty chieftains of the band below, with their corselets donned, and their swords and casques beside them, were sitting, stolid and silent, at a table, in the middle of the room, and might have been taken for automatons, save for the solemn regularity with which they ever and anon lifted to their moustachioed lips their several goblets, and then, with a complacent grunt, re-settled to their contemplations. Striking was the contrast which their northern phlegm presented to a crowd of Italian clients, and petitioners, and parasites, who walked restlessly to and fro, talking loudly to each other, with all the vehement gestures and varying physiognomy of southern vivacity. There was a general stir and sensation as Adrian broke upon this miscellaneous company. The bandit captains nodded their heads mechanically; the pages bowed, and admired the fashion of his plume and hose; the clients, and petitioners, and parasites, crowded round him, each with a separate request for interest with his potent kinsman. Great need had Adrian of his wonted urbanity and address, in extricating himself from their grasp; and painfully did he win, at last, the low and narrow door, at which stood a tall servitor, who admitted or rejected the applicants, according to his interest or caprice.

"Is the Baron alone?" asked Adrian.

"Why, no, my lord: a foreign signor is with him—but to you he is of course visible."

"Well, you may admit me. I would inquire of his health."

The servitor opened the door—through whose aperture peered many a jealous and wistful eye—and consigned Adrian to the guidance of a page, who, older and of greater esteem than the loiterers in the ante-room, was the especial henchman of the lord of the castle. Passing another, but empty chamber vast and dreary, Adrian found himself in a small cabinet, and in the presence of his kinsman.

Before a table, bearing the implements of writing, sate the old Colonna: a robe of rich furs and velvet hung loose upon his tall and stately frame: from a round skull-cap, of comforting warmth and crimson hue, a few grey locks descended, and mixed with a

long and reverent beard. The countenance of the aged noble, who had long passed his eightieth year, still retained the traces of a comeliness for which in earlier manhood he was remarkable. His eyes, if deep-sunken, were still keen and lively, and sparkled with all the fire of youth; his mouth curved upward in a pleasant though half-satiric, smile; and his appearance on the whole was prepossessing and commanding, indicating rather the high blood, the shrewd wit, and the gallant valour of the patrician, than his craft, hypocrisy, and habitual but disdainful spirit of oppression.

Stephen Colonna, without being absolutely a hero, was indeed far braver than most of the Romans, though he held fast to the Italian maxim—never to fight an enemy while it is possible to cheat him. Two faults, however, marred the effect of his sagacity: a supreme insolence of disposition, and a profound belief in the lights of his experience. He was incapable of analogy. What had never happened in his time, he was perfectly persuaded never could happen. Thus, though generally esteemed an able diplomatist, he had the cunning of the intrigant, and not the providence of a statesman. If, however, pride made him arrogant in prosperity, it supported him in misfortune. And in the earlier vicissitudes of a life which had partly been consumed in exile, he had developed many noble qualities of fortitude, endurance, and real greatness of soul; which showed that his failings were rather acquired by circumstance than derived from nature. His numerous and high-born race were proud of their chief; and with justice; for he was the ablest and most honoured, not only of the direct branch of the Colonna, but also, perhaps, of all the more powerful barons.

Seated at the same table with Stephen Colonna was a man of noble presence, of about three or four and thirty years of age, in whom Adrian instantly recognised Walter de Montreal. This celebrated knight was scarcely of the personal appearance which might have corresponded with the terror his name generally excited. His face was handsome, almost to the extreme of womanish delicacy. His fair hair waved long and freely over a white and unwrinkled forehead; the life of a camp and the suns of Italy had but little embrowned his clear and healthful

complexion, which retained much of the bloom of youth. His features were aquiline and regular ; his eyes, of a light hazel, were large, bright, and penetrating ; and a short, but curled beard and moustachio, trimmed with soldier-like precision, and very little darker than the hair, gave indeed a martial expression to his comely countenance, but rather the expression which might have suited the hero of courts and tournaments, than the chief of a brigand's camp. The aspect, manner, and bearing, of the Provençal were those which captivate rather than awe,—blending, as they did, a certain military frankness with the easy and graceful dignity of one conscious of gentle birth, and accustomed to mix, on equal terms, with the great and noble. His form happily contrasted and elevated the character of a countenance which required strength and stature to free its uncommon beauty from the charge of effeminacy, being of great height and remarkable muscular power, without the least approach to clumsy and unwieldy bulk : it erred, indeed, rather to the side of leanness than flesh,—at once robust and slender. But the chief personal distinction of this warrior, the most redoubted lance of Italy, was an air and carriage of chivalric and heroic grace, greatly set off at this time by his splendid dress, which was of brown velvet sown with pearls, over which hung the surcoat worn by the Knights of the Hospital, whereon was wrought, in white, the eight-pointed cross that made the badge of his order. The Knight's attitude was that of earnest conversation, bending slightly forward towards the Colonna, and resting both his hands—which (according to the usual distinction of the old Norman race,¹ from whom, though born in Provence, Montreal boasted his descent) were small and delicate, the fingers being covered with jewels, as was the fashion of the day—upon the golden hilt of an enormous sword, on the sheath of which was elaborately wrought the silver lilies that made the device of the Provençal Brotherhood of Jerusalem.

“Good morrow, fair kinsman !” said Stephen. “Seat thyself,

¹ Small hands and feet, however disproportioned to the rest of the person, were at that time deemed no less a distinction of the well-born, than they have been in a more refined age. Many readers will remember the pain occasioned to Petrarch by his tight shoes. The supposed beauty of this peculiarity is more derived from the feudal than the classic time.

I pray ; and know in this knightly visitor the celebrated *Sieur de Montreal*."

"Ah, my Lord," said *Montreal*, smiling, as he saluted *Adrian* ; "and how is my lady at home ?"

"You mistake, Sir Knight," quoth *Stephen* : "my young kinsman is not yet married : 'faith, as *Pope Boniface* remarked, when he lay stretched on a sick-bed, and his confessor talked to him about *Abraham's bosom*, 'that is a pleasure the greater for being deferred.'"

"The Signor will pardon my mistake," returned *Montreal*.

"But not," said *Adrian*, "the neglect of Sir *Walter* in not ascertaining the fact in person. My thanks to him, noble kinsman, are greater than you weet of ; and he promised to visit me, that he might receive them at leisure."

"I assure you, Signor," answered *Montreal*, "that I have not forgotten the invitation ; but so weighty hitherto have been my affairs at *Rome*, that I have been obliged to parley with my impatience to better our acquaintance."

"Oh, ye knew each other before ?" said *Stephen*. "And how ?"

"My Lord, there is a damsel in the case," replied *Montreal*. "Excuse my silence."

"Ah, *Adrian*, *Adrian* ! when will you learn my continence !" said *Stephen*, solemnly stroking his grey beard. "What an example I set you ! But a truce to this light conversation,—let us resume our theme. You must know, *Adrian*, that it is to the brave band of my guest I am indebted for those valiant gentlemen below, who keep *Rome* so quiet, though my poor habitation so noisy. He has called to proffer more assistance, if need be ; and to advise me on the affairs of Northern Italy. Continue, I pray thee, Sir Knight ; I have no disguises from my kinsman."

"Thou seest," said *Montreal*, fixing his penetrating eyes on *Adrian*, "thou seest, doubtless, my Lord, that Italy at this moment presents to us a remarkable spectacle. It is a contest between two opposing powers, which shall destroy the other. The one power is that of the unruly and turbulent people—a power which they call '*Liberty* ;' the other power is that of the

chiefs and princes—a power which they more appropriately call ‘Order.’ Between these parties the cities of Italy are divided. In Florence, in Genoa, in Pisa, for instance, is established a Free State—a Republic, God wot! and a more riotous, unhappy state of government cannot well be imagined.”

“That is perfectly true,” quoth Stephen; “they banished my own first cousin from Genoa.”

“A perpetual strife, in short,” continued Montreal, “between the great families; an alternation of prosecutions, and confiscations, and banishments: to-day the Guelfs proscribe the Ghibellines—to-morrow, the Ghibellines drive out the Guelfs. This may be liberty, but it is the liberty of the strong against the weak. In the other cities, as Milan, as Verona, as Bologna, the people are under the rule of one man,—who calls himself a prince, and whom his enemies call a tyrant. Having more force than any other citizen, he preserves a firm government; having more constant demand on his intellect and energies than the other citizens, he also preserves a wise one. These two orders of government are enlisted against each other; whenever the people in the one rebel against their prince, the people of the other—that is the Free States—send arms and money to their assistance.”

“You hear, Adrian, how wicked those last are,” quoth Stephen.

“Now it seems to me,” continued Montreal, “that this contest must end some time or other. All Italy must become republican or monarchical. It is easy to predict which will be the result.”

“Yes, Liberty must conquer in the end!” said Adrian, warmly.

“Pardon me, young Lord; my opinion is entirely the reverse. You perceive that these republics are commercial,—are traders; they esteem wealth, they despise valour, they cultivate all trades save that of the armourer. Accordingly, how do they maintain themselves in war? By their own citizens? Not a whit of it! Either they send to some foreign chief, and promise, if he grant them his protection, the principality of the city for five or ten years in return; or else they borrow from some hardy adventurer, like myself, as many troops as they can afford to pay for. Is it not so, Lord Adrian?”

Adrian nodded his reluctant assent.

"Well, then, it is the fault of the foreign chief if he do not make his power permanent ; as has been already done in States once free by the Visconti and the Scala : or else it is the fault of the captain of the mercenaries if he do not convert his brigands into senators, and himself into a king. These are events so natural, that one day or other they will occur throughout all Italy. And all Italy will then become monarchical. Now it seems to me the interest of all the powerful families—your own, at Rome, as that of the Visconti at Milan—to expedite this epoch, and to check, while you yet may with ease, that rebellious contagion amongst the people which is now rapidly spreading, and which ends in the fever of licence to them, but in the corruption of death to you. In these free States, the nobles are the first to suffer : first your privileges, then your property, are swept away. Nay, in Florence, as ye well know, my Lords, no noble is even capable of holding the meanest office in the State!"

"Villains!" said Colonna, "they violate the first law of nature!"

"At this moment," resumed Montreal, who, engrossed with his subject, little heeded the interruptions he received from the holy indignation of the Baron: "at this moment, there are many—the wisest, perhaps, in the free States—who desire to renew the old Lombard leagues, in defence of their common freedom everywhere, and against whosoever shall aspire to be prince. Fortunately, the deadly jealousies between these merchant States—the base plebeian jealousies—more of trade than of glory—interpose at present an irresistible obstacle to this design ; and Florence, the most stirring and the most esteemed of all, is happily so reduced by reverses of commerce as to be utterly unable to follow out so great an undertaking. Now, then, is the time for us, my Lords ; while these obstacles are so great for our foes, now is the time for us to form and cement a counter-league between all the princes of Italy. To you, noble Stephen, I have come, as your rank demands,—alone of all the barons of Rome,—to propose to you this honourable union. Observe what advantages it proffers to your house. The popes have abandoned Rome for ever ; there is no counterpoise to your

ambition,—there need be none to your power. You see before you the examples of Visconti and Taddeo di Pepoli. You may found in Rome, the first city of Italy, a supreme and uncontrolled principality, subjugate utterly your weaker rivals,—the Savelli, the Malatesta, the Orsini,—and leave to your sons' sons an hereditary kingdom that may aspire once more, perhaps, to the empire of the world."

Stephen shaded his face with his hand as he answered: "But this, noble Montreal, requires means:—money and men."

"Of the last, you can command from me enow—my small company, the best disciplined, can (whenever I please) swell to the most numerous in Italy: in the first, noble Baron, the rich house of Colonna cannot fail; and even a mortgage on its vast estates may be well repaid when you have possessed yourself of the whole revenues of Rome. You see," continued Montreal, turning to Adrian, in whose youth he expected a more warm ally than in his hoary kinsman; "you see at a glance how feasible is this project, and what a mighty field it opens to your house."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said Adrian, rising from his seat, and giving vent to the indignation he had with difficulty suppressed, "I grieve much that, beneath the roof of the first citizen of Rome, a stranger should attempt thus calmly, and without interruption, to excite the ambition of emulating the execrated celebrity of a Visconti or a Pepoli. Speak, my Lord! (turning to Stephen)—speak, noble kinsman! and tell this Knight of Provence, that if by a Colonna the ancient grandeur of Rome cannot be restored, it shall not be, at least, by a Colonna that her last wrecks of liberty shall be swept away."

"How now, Adrian!—how now, sweet kinsman!" said Stephen, thus suddenly appealed to; "calm thyself, I pr'ythee. Noble Sir Walter, he is young—young and hasty—he means not to offend thee."

"Of that I am persuaded," returned Montreal, coldly, but with great and courteous command of temper. "He speaks from the impulse of the moment—a praiseworthy fault in youth. It was mine at his age, and many a time have I nearly lost my life for the rashness. Nay, Signor, nay!—touch not your sword so

meaningly, as if you fancied I intimated a threat ; far from me such presumption. I have learned sufficient caution, believe me, in the wars, not wantonly to draw against me a blade which I have seen wielded against such odds."

Touched, despite himself, by the courtesy of the Knight, and the allusion to a scene in which, perhaps, his life had been preserved by Montreal, Adrian extended his hand to the latter.

"I was to blame for my haste," said he, frankly ; "but know, by my very heat," he added, more gravely, "that your project will find no friends among the Colonna. Nay, in the presence of my noble kinsman, I dare to tell you, that could even his high sanction lend itself to such a scheme, the best hearts of his house would desert him ; and I myself, his kinsman, would man yonder castle against so unnatural an ambition!" .

A slight and scarce perceptible cloud passed over Montreal's countenance at these words ; and he bit his lip ere he replied :

"Yet if the Orsini be less scrupulous, their first exertion of power would be heard in the crashing house of the Colonna."

"Know you," returned Adrian, "that one of our mottoes is this haughty address to the Romans :—' If we fall, ye fall also ' ? And better that fate, than arise upon the wrecks of our native city."

"Well, well, well!" said Montreal, re-seating himself ; "I see that I must leave Rome to herself—the League must thrive without her aid. I did but jest, touching the Orsini, for they have not the power that would make their efforts safe. Let us sweep, then, our past conference from our recollection. It is the nineteenth, I think, Lord Colonna, on which you propose to repair to Corneto, with your friends and retainers, and on which you have invited my attendance?"

"It is on that day, Sir Knight," replied the Baron, evidently much relieved by the turn the conversation had assumed. "The fact is, that we have been so charged with indifference to the interests of the good people, that I strain a point in this expedition to contradict the assertion ; and we propose, therefore, to escort and protect, against the robbers of the road, a convoy of corn to Corneto. In truth, I may add another reason, besides fear of the robbers, that makes me desire as numerous

a train as possible. I wish to show my enemies, and the people generally, the solid and growing power of my house; the display of such an armed band as I hope to levy will be a magnificent occasion to strike awe into the riotous and refractory. Adrian, you will collect your servitors, I trust, on that day; we would not be without you."

"And as we ride along, fair Signor," said Montreal, inclining to Adrian, "we will find at least one subject on which we can agree: all brave men and true knights have one common topic—and its name is Woman. You must make me acquainted with the names of the fairest dames of Rome; and we will discuss old adventures in the Parliament of Love, and hope for new. By the way, I suppose, Lord Adrian, you, with the rest of your countrymen, are Petrarch-stricken?"

"Do you not share our enthusiasm? Slur not so your gallantry, I pray you."

"Come, we must not again disagree; but, by my halidame, I think one troubadour roundel worth all that Petrarch ever wrote. He has but borrowed from our knightly poesy to disguise it, like a carpet coxcomb."

"Well," said Adrian, gaily, "for every line of the troubadours that you quote, I will cite you another. I will forgive you for injustice to Petrarch if you are just to the troubadours."

"Just!" cried Montreal, with real enthusiasm: "I am of the land, nay, the very blood, of the troubadour! But we grow too light for your noble kinsman; and it is time for me to bid you, for the present, farewell. My Lord Colonna, peace be with you; farewell, Sir Adrian—brother mine in knighthood—remember your challenge."

And with an easy and careless grace the Knight of St. John took his leave. The old Baron, making a dumb sign of excuse to Adrian, followed Montreal into the adjoining room.

"Sir Knight!" said he, "Sir Knight!" as he closed the door upon Adrian, and then drew Montreal to the recess of the casement—"a word in your ear. Think not I slight your offer; but these young men must be managed; the plot is great—noble—grateful to my heart; but it requires time and caution. I have many of my house, scrupulous as yon hot-skull, to win over; the

way is pleasant, but must be sounded well and carefully; you understand?"

From under his bent brows, Montreal darted one keen glance at Stephen, and then answered:

"My friendship for you dictated my offer. The League may stand without the Colonna—beware a time when the Colonna cannot stand without the League. My Lord, look well around you. There are more freemen—ay, bold and stirring ones, too—in Rome, than you imagine. Beware Rienzi! Adieu; we meet soon again."

Thus saying, Montreal departed, soliloquising as he passed with his careless step through the crowded ante-room:

"I shall fail here!—these caitiff nobles have neither the courage to be great, nor the wisdom to be honest. Let them fall!—I may find an adventurer from the people; an adventurer like myself, worth them all."

No sooner had Stephen returned to Adrian than he flung his arms affectionately round his ward, who was preparing his pride for some sharp rebuke for his petulance.

"Nobly feigned—admirable, admirable!" cried the Baron; "you have learned the true art of a statesman at the Emperor's court. I always thought you would—always said it. You saw the dilemma I was in, thus taken by surprise by that barbarian's mad scheme; afraid to refuse—more afraid to accept. You extricated me with consummate address: that passion—so natural to your age—was a famous feint; drew off the attack; gave me time to breathe; allowed me to play with the savage. But we must not offend him, you know: all my retainers would desert me, or sell me to the Orsini, or cut my throat, if he but held up his finger. Oh! it was admirably managed, Adrian—admirably!"

"Thank Heaven!" said Adrian, with some difficulty recovering the breath which his astonishment had taken away. "You do not think of embracing that black proposition?"

"Think of it! no, indeed!" said Stephen, throwing himself back on his chair. "Why, do you not know my age, boy? Hard on my ninetieth year, I should be a fool indeed to throw myself into such a whirl of turbulence and agitation. I want to

keep what I have, not risk it by grasping more. Am I not the beloved of the pope? shall I hazard his excommunication? Am I not the most powerful of the nobles? should I be more if I were king? At my age, to talk to me of such stuff!—the man's an idiot. Besides," added the old man, sinking his voice, and looking fearfully round, "if I were a king, my sons might poison me for the succession. They are good lads, Adrian, very. But such a temptation!—I would not throw it in their way. These grey hairs have experience. Tyrants don't die a natural death; no, no! Plague on the Knight, say I; he has already cast me into a cold sweat."

Adrian gazed on the working features of the old man, whose selfishness thus preserved him from crime. He listened to his concluding words—full of the dark truth of the times; and as the high and pure ambition of Rienzi flashed upon him in contrast, he felt that he could not blame its fervour or wonder at its excess.

"And then, too," resumed the Baron, speaking more deliberately as he recovered his self-possession, "this man, by way of a warning, shows me, at a glance, his whole ignorance of the state. What think you? he has mingled with the mob, and taken their rank breath for power; yes, he thinks words are soldiers, and bade me—me, Stephen Colonna—beware—of whom, think you? No, you will never guess!—of that speechmaker, Rienzi! my own old jesting guest! Ha! ha! ha!—the ignorance of these barbarians! ha! ha! ha!" and the old man laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Yet many of the nobles fear that same Rienzi," said Adrian, gravely.

"Ah! let them, let them!—they have not our experience—our knowledge of the world, Adrian. Tut, man,—when did declamation ever overthrow castles and conquer soldiery? I like Rienzi to harangue the mob about old Rome, and such stuff; it gives them something to think of and prate about, and so all their fierceness evaporates in words; they might burn a house if they did not hear a speech. But, now I am on that score, I must own the pedant has grown impudent in his new office; here, here,—I received this paper ere I rose to-day. I hear a similar

insolence has been shown to all the nobles. Read it, will you," and the Colonna put a scroll into his kinsman's hand.

"I have received the like," said Adrian, glancing at it. "It is a request of Rienzi's to attend at the Church of St. John of Lateran, to hear explained the inscription on a Table just discovered. It bears, he saith, the most intimate connexion with the welfare and state of Rome."

"Very entertaining, I dare to say, to professors and bookmen. Pardon me, kinsman; I forgot your taste for these things; and my son, Gianni, too, shares your fantasy. Well, well! it is innocent enough! Go—the man talks well."

"Will you not attend, too?"

"I—my dear boy—I!" said the old Colonna, opening his eyes in such astonishment that Adrian could not help laughing at the simplicity of his own question.

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERVIEW, AND THE DOUBT.

As Adrian turned from the palace of his guardian, and bent his way in the direction of the Forum, he came somewhat unexpectedly upon Raimond, bishop of Orvietto, who, mounted upon a low palfrey, and accompanied by some three or four of his waiting-men, halted abruptly when he recognised the young noble.

"Ah, my son! it is seldom that I see thee: how fares it with thee?—well? So, so! I rejoice to hear it. Alas! what a state of society is ours, when compared to the tranquil pleasures of Avignon! There, all men who, like us, are fond of the same pursuits, the same studies, *deliciæ musarum*, hum! hum! (the Bishop was proud of an occasional quotation, right or wrong), are brought easily and naturally together. But here we scarcely dare stir out of our houses, save upon great occasions. But, talking of great occasions, and the Muses, reminds me of our good

Rienzi's invitation to the Lateran: of course you will attend? 'tis a mighty knotty piece of Latin he proposes to solve—so I hear, at least: very interesting to us, my son,—very!”

“It is to-morrow,” answered Adrian. “Yes, assuredly; I will be there.”

“And harkye, my son,” said the Bishop, resting his hand affectionately on Adrian's shoulder, “I have reason to hope that he will remind our poor citizens of the Jubilee for the year Fifty, and stir them towards clearing the road of the brigands: a necessary injunction, and one to be heeded timeously; for who will come here for absolution when he stands a chance of rushing unannealed upon purgatory by the way? You have heard Rienzi,—ay? quite a Cicero—quite! Well, Heaven bless you, my son! you will not fail?”

“Nay, not I.”

“Yet, stay—a word with you: just suggest to all whom you may meet the advisability of a full meeting; it looks well for the city to show respect to letters.”

“To say nothing of the Jubilee,” added Adrian, smiling.

“Ah, to say nothing of the Jubilee—very good! Adieu for the present!” And the Bishop, resettling himself on his saddle, ambled solemnly on to visit his various friends, and press them to the meeting.

Meanwhile, Adrian continued his course till he had passed the Capitol, the Arch of Severus, the crumbling columns of the fane of Jupiter, and found himself amidst the long grass, the whispering reeds, and the neglected vines that wave over the now-vanished pomp of the Golden House of Nero. Seating himself on a fallen pillar—by that spot where the traveller descends to the (so-called) Baths of Livia—he looked impatiently to the sun, as to blame it for the slowness of its march.

Not long, however, had he to wait before a light step was heard crushing the fragrant grass: and presently through the arching vines gleamed a face that might well have seemed the nymph, the goddess of the scene.

“My beautiful! my Irene!—how shall I thank thee!”

It was long before the delighted lover suffered himself to observe upon Irene's face a sadness that did not usually cloud it

in his presence. Her voice, too, trembled; her words seemed constrained and cold.

"Have I offended thee?" he asked; "or what less misfortune hath occurred?"

Irene raised her eyes to her lover's, and said, looking at him earnestly, "Tell me, my Lord, in sober and simple truth, tell me, would it grieve thee much were this to be our last meeting?"

Paler than the marble at his feet grew the dark cheek of Adrian. It was some moments ere he could reply, and he did so then with a forced smile and a quivering lip.

"Jest not so, Irene! Last!—that is not a word for us!"

"But hear me, my Lord——"

"Why so cold?—call me Adrian!—friend!—lover! or be dumb!"

"Well, then, my soul's soul! my all of hope! my life's life!" exclaimed Irene passionately, "hear me! I fear that we stand at this moment upon some gulf whose depth I see not, but which may divide us for ever! Thou knowest the real nature of my brother, and dost not misread him as many do. Long has he planned, and schemed, and communed with himself, and feeling his way amidst the people, prepared the path to some great design. But now——(thou wilt not betray—thou wilt not injure him?—he is *thy* friend!)"

"And thy brother! I would give my life for his! Say on!"

"But now, then," resumed Irene, "the time for that enterprise, whatever it be, is coming fast. I know not of its exact nature, but I know that it is against the nobles—against thy order—against thy house itself! If it succeed—oh, Adrian! thou thyself mayst not be free from danger; and my name, at least, will be coupled with the name of thy foes. If it fail,—my brother, my bold brother, is swept away! He will fall a victim to revenge or justice, call it as you will. Your kinsman may be his judge—his executioner; and I—even if I should yet live to mourn over the boast and glory of my humble line—could I permit myself to love, to see, one in whose veins flowed the blood of his destroyer? Oh! I am wretched!—wretched! these thoughts make me well-nigh mad!" and wringing her hands bitterly Irene sobbed aloud.

Adrian himself was struck forcibly by the picture thus presented to him, although the alternative it embraced had often before forced itself dimly on his mind. It was true, however, that, not seeing the schemes of Rienzi backed by any physical power, and never yet having witnessed the mighty force of a moral revolution, he did not conceive that any rise to which he might instigate the people could be permanently successful: and, as for his punishment, in that city, where all justice was the slave of interest, Adrian knew himself powerful enough to obtain forgiveness even for the greatest of all crimes—armed insurrection against the nobles. As these thoughts recurred to him, he gained the courage to console and cheer Irene. But his efforts were only partially successful. Awakened by her fears to that consideration of the future which hitherto she had forgotten, Irene, for the first time, seemed deaf to the charmer's voice.

"Alas!" said she, sadly, "even at the best, what can this love, that we have so blindly encouraged—what can it end in? Thou must not wed with one like me!—and I! how foolish I have been!"

"Recall thy senses then, Irene," said Adrian, proudly, partly perhaps in anger, partly in his experience of the sex. "Love another, and more wisely, if thou wilt; cancel thy vows with me, and continue to think it a crime to love, and a folly to be true!"

"Cruel!" said Irene, falteringly, and in her turn alarmed. "Dost thou speak in earnest?"

"Tell me, ere I answer you, tell me this: come death, come anguish, come a whole life of sorrow, as the end of this love, wouldst thou yet repent that thou hast loved? If so, thou knowest not the love that I feel for thee."

"Never! never can I repent!" said Irene, falling upon Adrian's neck; "forgive me!"

"But is there, in truth," said Adrian, a little while after this lover-like quarrel and reconciliation, "is there, in truth, so marked a difference between thy brother's past and his present bearing? How knowest thou that the time for action is so near?"

"Because now he sits closeted whole nights with all ranks of men; he shuts up his books,—he reads no more,—but when alone, walks to and fro his chamber, muttering to himself. Sometimes he pauses before the calendar, which of late he has fixed with his own hand against the wall, and passes his finger over the letters, till he comes to some chosen date, and then he plays with his sword and smiles. But two nights since, arms, too, in great number were brought to the house; and I heard the chief of the men who brought them, a grim giant, known well amongst the people, say, as he wiped his brow,—‘These will see work soon!’"

"Arms! Are you sure of that?" said Adrian, anxiously. "Nay, then, there is more in these schemes than I imagined! But (observing Irene's gaze bent fearfully on him as his voice changed, he added more gaily)—but come what may, believe me,—my beautiful! my adored! that while I live, thy brother shall not suffer from the wrath he may provoke,—nor I, though he forget our ancient friendship, cease to love thee less."

"Signora! Signora! child! it is time! we must go!" said the shrill voice of Benedetta, now peering through the foliage. "The working men pass home this way; I see them approaching."

The lovers parted; for the first time the serpent had penetrated into their Eden,—they had conversed, they had thought of other things than love.

CHAPTER III.

THE SITUATION OF A POPULAR PATRICIAN IN TIMES OF POPULAR DISCONTENT.
—SCENE OF THE LATERAN.

THE situation of a Patrician who honestly loves the people is, in those evil times, when power oppresses and freedom struggles,—when the two divisions of men are wrestling against each other,—the most irksome and perplexing that destiny can possibly contrive. Shall he take part with the nobles?—he betrays his conscience! With the people?—he deserts his friends! But that consequence of the last alternative is not

the sole—nor, perhaps to a strong mind, the most severe. All men are swayed and chained by public opinion—it is the public judge; but public opinion is not the same for all ranks. The public opinion that excites or deters the plebeian is the opinion of the plebeians,—of those whom he sees, and meets, and knows; of those with whom he is brought in contact,—those with whom he has mixed from childhood,—those whose praises are daily heard,—whose censure frowns upon him with every hour.¹ So, also, the public opinion of the great is the opinion of *their* equals,—of those whom birth and accident cast for ever in their way. This distinction is full of important practical deductions; it is one which, more than most maxims, should never be forgotten by a politician who desires to be profound. It is, then, an ordeal terrible to pass—which few plebeians ever pass, which it is therefore unjust to expect patricians to cross unfalteringly—the ordeal of opposing the public opinion which exists for *them*. They cannot help doubting their own judgment,—they cannot help thinking the voice of wisdom or of virtue speaks in those sounds which have been deemed oracles from their cradle. In the tribunal of Sectarian Prejudice they imagine they recognise the Court of Universal Conscience. Another powerful antidote to the activity of a patrician so placed, is in the certainty that to the last the motives of such activity will be alike misconstrued by the aristocracy he deserts and the people he joins. It seems so unnatural in a man to fly in the face of his own order, that the world is willing to suppose any clue to the mystery save that of honest conviction or lofty patriotism. “Ambition!” says one. “Disappointment!” cries another. “Some private grudge!” hints a third. “Mob-courting vanity!” sneers a fourth. The people admire at first, but suspect afterwards. The moment he thwarts a popular wish, there is no redemption for him: he is

¹ It is the same in still smaller divisions. The public opinion for lawyers is that of lawyers; of soldiers, that of the army; of scholars, it is that of men of literature and science. And to the susceptible among the latter, the hostile criticism of learning has been more stinging than the severest moral censures of the vulgar. Many a man has done a great act, or composed a great work, solely to please the two or three persons constantly present to him. Their voice was *his* public opinion. The public opinion that operated on Bishop, the murderer, was the opinion of the Burkers, his comrades. Did that condemn him? No! He knew no other public opinion till he came to be hanged, and caught the loathing eyes, and heard the hissing execrations of the crowd below his gibbet.

accused of having acted the hypocrite,—of having worn the sheep's fleece : and now, say they,—“ See ! the wolf's teeth peep out ! ” Is he familiar with the people ?—it is cajolery ! Is he distant ?—it is pride ! What, then, sustains a man in such a situation, following his own conscience, with his eyes opened to all the perils of the path ? Away with the cant of public opinion,—away with the poor delusion of posthumous justice ; he will offend the first, he will never obtain the last. What sustains him ? His OWN SOUL ! A man thoroughly great has a certain contempt for his kind while he aids them : their weal or woe are all : their applause—their blame—are nothing to him. He walks forth from the circle of birth and habit ; he is deaf to the little motives of little men. High, through the widest space his orbit may describe, he holds on his course to guide or to enlighten ; but the noises below reach him not ! Until the wheel is broken,—until the dark void swallow up the star—it makes melody, night and day, to its own ear ; thirsting for no sound from the earth it illumines, anxious for no companionship in the path through which it rolls, conscious of its own glory, and contented, therefore, to be *alone* !

But minds of this order are rare. All ages cannot produce them. They are exceptions to the ordinary and human virtue, which is influenced and regulated by external circumstance. At a time when even to be merely susceptible to the voice of fame was a great pre-eminence in moral energies over the rest of mankind, it would be impossible that any one should ever have formed the conception of that more refined and metaphysical sentiment, that purer excitement to high deeds—that glory in one's own heart, which is so immeasurably above the desire of a renown that lackeys the heels of others. In fact, before we can dispense with the world, we must, by a long and severe novitiate—by the probation of much thought, and much sorrow—by deep and sad conviction of the vanity of all that the world can give us, have raised ourselves—not in the fervour of an hour, but habitually—*above* the world : an abstraction—an idealism—which, in our wiser age, how few even of the wisest can attain ! Yet, till we are thus fortunate, we know not the true divinity of contemplation, nor the all-sufficing mightiness of conscience ;

nor can we retreat with solemn footsteps into that Holy of Holies in our own souls, wherein we know, and feel, how much our nature is capable of the self-existence of a God!

But to return to the things and thoughts of earth. Those considerations, and those links of circumstance, which, in a similar situation have changed so many honest and courageous minds, changed also the mind of Adrian. He felt in a false position. His reason and conscience shared in the schemes of Rienzi, and his natural hardihood and love of enterprise would have led him actively to share the danger of their execution. But this, all his associations, his friendships, his private and household ties, loudly forbade. Against his order, against his house, against the companions of his youth, how could he plot secretly, or act sternly? By the goal to which he was impelled by patriotism, stood hypocrisy and ingratitude. Who would believe him the honest champion of his country who was a traitor to his friends? Thus, indeed,

“The native hue of resolution
Was sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought!”

And he who should have been by nature a leader of the time became only its spectator. Yet Adrian endeavoured to console himself for his present passiveness in a conviction of the policy of his conduct. He who takes no share in the commencement of civil revolutions, can often become, with the most effect, a mediator between the passions and the parties subsequently formed. Perhaps, under Adrian’s circumstances, delay was really the part of a prudent statesman; the very position which cripples at the first, often gives authority before the end. Clear from the excesses, and saved from the jealousies, of rival factions, all men are willing to look with complaisance and respect to a new actor in a turbulent drama; his moderation may make him trusted by the people; his rank enable him to be a fitting mediator with the nobles; and thus the qualities that would have rendered him a martyr at one period of the Revolution, raise him perhaps into a saviour at another.

Silent, therefore, and passive, Adrian waited the progress of events. If the projects of Rienzi failed, he might, by that

inactivity, the better preserve the people from new chains, and their champion from death. If those projects succeeded, he might equally save his house from the popular wrath—and, advocating liberty, check disorder. Such, at least, were his hopes; and thus did **the** Italian sagacity and caution of his character control and pacify the enthusiasm of youth and courage.

The sun shone, calm and cloudless, upon the vast concourse gathered before the broad space that surrounds the Church of St. John of Lateran. Partly by curiosity—partly by the desire of the Bishop of Orvietto—partly because it was an occasion in which they could display the pomp of their retinues—many of the principal Barons of Rome had gathered to this spot.

On one of the steps ascending to the church, with his mantle folded round him, stood Walter de Montreal, gazing on the various parties that, one after another, swept through the lane which the soldiers of the Church preserved unimpeded, in the middle of the crowd, for the access of the principal nobles. He watched with interest, though with his usual carelessness of air and roving glance, the different marks and looks of welcome given by the populace to the different personages of note. Banners and pennons preceded each Signor, and, as they waved aloft, the witticisms or nicknames—the brief words of praise or censure, that imply so much—which passed to and fro among that lively crowd, were treasured carefully in his recollection.

“Make way, there!—way for my Lord Martino Orsini—Baron di Porto!”

“Peace, minion!—draw back! Way for the Signor Adrian Colonna, Baron di Castello, and Knight of the Empire.”

And at those two rival shouts, you saw waving on high the golden bear of the Orsini, with the motto—“Beware my embrace!” and the solitary column on an azure ground, of the Colonna, with Adrian’s especial device—“Sad, but strong.” The train of Martino Orsini was much more numerous than that of Adrian, which last consisted but of ten servitors. But Adrian’s men attracted far greater admiration amongst the crowd, and pleased more the experienced eye of the warlike Knight of

St. John. Their arms were polished like mirrors ; their height was to an inch the same ; their march was regular and sedate ; their mien erect ; they looked neither to the right nor left ; they betrayed that ineffable discipline—that harmony of order—which Adrian had learned to impart to his men during his own apprenticeship of arms. But the disorderly train of the Lord of Porto was composed of men of all heights. Their arms were ill-polished and ill-fashioned, and they pressed confusedly on each other ; they laughed and spoke aloud ; and in their mien and bearing expressed all the insolence of men who despised alike the master they served and the people they awed. The two bands coming unexpectedly on each other through this narrow defile, the jealousy of the two houses presently declared itself. Each pressed forward for the precedence ; and, as the quiet regularity of Adrian's train, and even its compact paucity of numbers, enabled it to pass before the servitors of his rival, the populace set up a loud shout : "A Colonna for ever!"—"Let the Bear dance after the Column!"

"On, ye knaves!" said Orsini aloud to his men. "How have ye suffered this affront?" And passing himself to the head of his men, he would have advanced through the midst of his rival's train, had not a tall guard, in the Pope's livery, placed his baton in the way.

"Pardon, my Lord! We have the Vicar's express commands to suffer no struggling of the different trains one with another."

"Knave! dost thou bandy words with me?" said the fierce Orsini ; and with his sword he clove the baton in two.

"In the Vicar's name, I command you to fall back!" said the sturdy guard, now placing his huge bulk in the very front of the noble's path.

"It is Cecco del Vecchio!" cried those of the populace who were near enough to perceive the interruption and its cause.

"Ay," said one, "the good Vicar has put many of the stoutest fellows in the Pope's livery, in order the better to keep peace. He could have chosen none better than Cecco."

"But he must not fall!" cried another, as Orsini, glaring on the smith, drew back his sword as if to plunge it through his bosom.

"Shame—shame! Shall the Pope be thus insulted in his own city?" cried several voices. "Down with the sacrilegious—down!" And, as if by a preconcerted plan, a whole body of the mob broke at once through the lane, and swept like a torrent over Orsini and his jostled and ill-assorted train. Orsini himself was thrown on the ground with violence, and trampled upon by a hundred footsteps; his men, huddled and struggling as much against themselves as against the mob, were scattered and overset; and when, by a great effort of the guards, headed by the smith himself, order was again restored, and the line reformed, Orsini, well nigh choked with his rage and humiliation, and greatly bruised by the rude assaults he had received, could scarcely stir from the ground. The officers of the Pope raised him, and, when he was on his legs, he looked wildly around for his sword, which, falling from his hand, had been kicked amongst the crowd, and seeing it not, he said, between his ground teeth, to Cecco del Vecchio—

"Fellow, thy neck shall answer this outrage, or may God desert me!" and passed along through the space; while a half-suppressed and exultant hoot from the bystanders followed his path.

"Way there!" cried the smith, "for the Lord Martino di Porto! and may all the people know that he has threatened to take my life for the discharge of my duty in obedience to the Pope's Vicar!"

"He dare not!" shouted out a thousand voices; "the people can protect their own!"

This scene had not been lost on the Provençal, who well knew how to construe the wind by the direction of straws, and saw at once, by the boldness of the populace, that they themselves were conscious of a coming tempest. "*Par Dieu*," said he, as he saluted Adrian, who, gravely, and without looking behind, had now won the steps of the church; "yon tall fellow has a brave heart, and many friends, too. What think you?" he added, in a low whisper; "is not this scene a proof that the nobles are less safe than they wot of?"

"The beast begins to kick against the spur, Sir Knight," answered Adrian; "a wise horseman should, in such a case, take

care how he pull the rein too tight, lest the beast should rear, and he be overthrown;—yet that is the policy thou wouldst recommend.”

“You mistake,” returned Montreal; “my wish was to give Rome one sovereign instead of many tyrants. But hark! what means that bell?”

“The ceremony is about to begin,” answered Adrian. “Shall we enter the church together?”

Seldom had a temple consecrated to God witnessed so singular a spectacle as that which now animated the solemn space of the Lateran.

In the centre of the church, seats were raised in an amphitheatre, at the far end of which was a scaffolding, a little higher than the rest; below this spot, but high enough to be in sight of all the concourse, was placed a vast table of iron, on which was graven an ancient inscription, and bearing in its centre a clear and prominent device, presently to be explained.

The seats were covered with cloth and rich tapestry. In the rear of the church was drawn a purple curtain. Around the amphitheatre were the officers of the Church, in the party-coloured liveries of the Pope. To the right of the scaffold sate Raimond, Bishop of Orvietto, in his robes of state. On the benches round him you saw all the marked personages of Rome—the judges, the men of letters, the nobles, from the lofty rank of the Savelli to the inferior grade of a Raselli. The space beyond the amphitheatre was filled with the people, who now poured fast in, stream after stream: all the while rang, clear and loud, the great bell of the church.

At length, as Adrian and Montreal seated themselves at a little distance from Raimond, the bell suddenly ceased—the murmurs of the people were stilled—the purple curtain was withdrawn, and Rienzi came forth with slow and majestic steps. He came—but not in his usual sombre and plain attire. Over his broad breast he wore a vest of dazzling whiteness—a long robe, in the ample fashion of the toga, descended to his feet and swept the floor. On his head he wore a fold of white cloth, in the centre of which shone a golden crown. But the crown was divided, or cloven, as it were by the mystic ornament of a silver

sword, which, attracting the universal attention, testified at once that this strange garb was worn, not from the vanity of display, but for the sake of presenting to the concourse—in the person of the citizen—a type and emblem of that state of the city on which he was about to descant.

“Faith,” whispered one of the old nobles to his neighbour, “the plebeian assumes it bravely.”

“It will be rare sport,” said a second. “I trust the good man will put some jests in his discourse.”

“What showman’s tricks are these?” said a third.

“He is certainly crazed!” said a fourth.

“How handsome he is!” said the women, mixed with the populace.

“This is a man who has learned the people by heart,” observed Montreal to Adrian. “He knows he must speak to the eye in order to win the mind; a knave—a wise knave!”

And now Rienzi had ascended the scaffold; and as he looked long and steadfastly around the meeting, the high and thoughtful repose of his majestic countenance, its deep and solemn gravity, hushed all the murmurs, and made its effect equally felt by the sneering nobles as the impatient populace.

“Signors of Rome,” said he, at length, “and ye, friends, and citizens, you have heard why we are met together this day and you, my Lord Bishop of Orvietto,—and ye, fellow-labourers with me in the field of letters,—ye, too, are aware that it is upon some matter relative to that ancient Rome, the rise and the decline of whose past power and glories we have spent our youth in endeavouring to comprehend. But this, believe me, is no vain enigma of erudition, useful but to the studious,—referring but to the dead. Let the past perish!—let darkness shroud it!—let it sleep for ever over the crumbling temples and desolate tombs of its forgotten sons,—if it cannot afford us, from its disburied secrets, a guide for the Present and the Future. What, my Lords, ye have thought that it was for the sake of antiquity alone that we have wasted our nights and days in studying what antiquity can teach us! You are mistaken; it is nothing to know what we have been, unless it is with the desire of knowing that

which we ought to be. Our ancestors are mere dust and ashes, save when they speak to our posterity; and then their voices resound, not from the earth below, but the heaven above. There is an eloquence in Memory, because it is the nurse of Hope. There is a sanctity in the past, but only because of the chronicles it retains,—chronicles of the progress of mankind,—stepping-stone in civilization, in liberty, and in knowledge. Our fathers forbid us to recede,—they teach us what is our rightful heritage,—they bid us reclaim, they bid us augment, that heritage,—preserve their virtues, and avoid their errors. These are the true uses of the Past. Like the sacred edifice in which we are,—it is a tomb upon which to rear a temple. I see that you marvel at this long beginning; ye look to each other—ye ask to what it tends. Behold this broad plate of iron; upon it is graven an inscription but lately disinterred from the heaps of stone and ruin, which—O shame to Rome!—were once the palaces of empire, and the arches of triumphant power. The device in the centre of the table, which you behold, conveys the act of the Roman Senators,—who are conferring upon Vespasian the imperial authority. It is this inscription which I have invited you to hear read! It specifies the very terms and limits of the authority thus conferred. To the Emperor was confided the power of making laws and alliances with whatsoever nation,—of increasing, or of diminishing, the limits of towns and districts,—of—mark this, my Lords!—exalting men to the rank of dukes and kings,—ay, and of deposing and degrading them:—of making cities, and of unmaking: in short, of all the attributes of imperial power. Yes, to that Emperor was confided this vast authority; but, by whom? Heed—listen, I pray you—let not a word be lost;—by whom, I say? By the Roman Senate! What was the Roman Senate? The Representative of the Roman People!”

“I knew he would come to that!” said the smith, who stood at the door with his fellows, but to whose ear, clear and distinct, rolled the silver voice of Rienzi.

“Brave fellow! and this, too, in the hearing of the Lords!”

“Ay, you see what the people were, and we should never have known this but for him.”

"Peace, fellows!" said the officer to those of the crowd from whom came those whispered sentences.

Rienzi continued.—"Yes, it is the people who intrusted this power—to the people, therefore, it belongs! Did the haughty Emperor arrogate the crown? Could he assume the authority of himself? Was it born with him? Did he derive it, my Lord Barons, from the possession of towered castles—of lofty lineage? No! all-powerful as he was, he had no right to one atom of that power, save from the voice and trust of the Roman people. Such, O my countrymen! such was even at that day, when Liberty was but the shadow of her former self,—such was the acknowledged prerogative of your fathers! All power was the gift of the people. What have ye to give now? Who, who, I say,—what single person, what petty chief, asks *you* for the authority he assumes? His senate is his sword; his chart of license is written, not with ink, but blood. The people!—there is *no* people! Oh! would to God that we might disentomb the spirit of the Past as easily as her records!"

"If I were your kinsman," whispered Montreal to Adrian, "I would give this man short breathing-time between his peroration and confession."

"What is your Emperor?" continued Rienzi; "a stranger. What the great head of your Church?—an exile! Ye are without your lawful chiefs; and why? Because ye are *not* without your law-defying tyrants! The license of your nobles, their discords, their dissensions, have driven our Holy Father from the heritage of St. Peter;—they have bathed your streets in your own blood; they have wasted the wealth of your labours on private quarrels and the maintenance of hireling ruffians! Your forces are exhausted against yourselves. You have made a mockery of your country, once the mistress of the world. You have steeped her lips in gall—ye have set a crown of thorns upon her head! What, my Lords!" cried he, turning sharply round towards the Savelli and Orsini, who endeavouring to shake off the thrill which the fiery eloquence of Rienzi had stricken to their hearts, now, by contemptuous gestures and scornful smiles, testified the displeasure they did not dare loudly to

utter in the presence of the Vicar and the people.—“What! even while I speak—not the sanctity of this place restrains you! I am an humble man—a citizen of Rome;—but I have this distinction: I have raised against myself many foes and scoffers for that which I have done for Rome. I am hated, because I love my country; I am despised, because I would exalt her. I retaliate—I shall be avenged. Three traitors in your own palaces shall betray you: their names are—Luxury, Envy, and Dissension!”

“There he had them on the hip!”

“Ha, ha! by the Holy Cross, that was good!”

“I would go to the hangman for such another keen stroke as that!”

“It is a shame if *we* are cowards, when one man is thus brave,” said the smith.

“This is the man we have always wanted!”

“Silence!” proclaimed the officer.

“O Romans!” resumed Rienzi, passionately—“awake! I conjure you! Let this memorial of your former power—your ancient liberties—sink deep into your souls. In a propitious hour, if ye seize it,—in an evil one, if ye suffer the golden opportunity to escape,—has this record of the past been unfolded to your eyes. Recollect that the Jubilee approaches.”

The Bishop of Orvietto smiled, and bowed approvingly; the people, the citizens, the inferior nobles, noted well those signs of encouragement; and, to their minds, the Pope himself, in the person of his Vicar, looked benignly on the daring of Rienzi.

“The jubilee approaches,—the eyes of all Christendom will be directed hither. Here, where, from all quarters of the globe, men come for peace, shall they find discord?—seeking absolution, shall they perceive but crime? In the centre of God’s dominion, shall they weep at your weakness?—in the seat of the martyred saints, shall they shudder at your vices?—in the fountain and source of Christ’s law, shall they find all law unknown? You were the glory of the world—will you be its by-word? You were its example—will you be its warning? Rise while it is yet time!—clear your roads from the bandits that infest them!—

your walls from the hirelings that they harbour! Banish these civil discords, or the men—how proud, how great, soever—who maintain them! Pluck the scales from the hand of Fraud!—the sword from the hand of Violence!—the balance and the sword are the ancient attributes of Justice!—restore them to *her* again! This be your high task,—these be your great ends! Deem any man who opposes them a traitor to his country. Gain a victory greater than those of the Cæsars—a victory over yourselves! Let the pilgrims of the world behold the resurrection of Rome! Make one epoch of the Jubilee of Religion and the Restoration of Law! Lay the sacrifice of your vanquished passions—the first-fruits of your renovated liberties—upon the very altar that these walls contain! and never! oh, never! since the world began, shall men have made a more grateful offering to their God!”

So intense was the sensation these words created in the audience—so breathless and overpowered did they leave the souls which they took by storm—that Rienzi had descended the scaffold, and already disappeared behind the curtain from which he had emerged, ere the crowd were fully aware that he had ceased.

The singularity of this sudden apparition—robed in mysterious splendour, and vanishing the moment its errand was fulfilled—gave additional effect to the words it had uttered. The whole character of that bold address became invested with a something preternatural and inspired; to the minds of the vulgar, the mortal was converted into the oracle; and marvelling at the unhesitating courage with which their idol had rebuked and conjured the haughty barons,—each of whom they regarded in the light of sanctioned executioners, whose anger could be made manifest at once by the gibbet or the axe,—the people could not but superstitiously imagine that nothing less than authority from above could have gifted their leader with such hardihood, and preserved him from the danger it incurred. In fact, it was in this very courage of Rienzi that his safety consisted; he was placed in those circumstances where audacity is prudence. Had he been less bold, the nobles would have been more severe; but so great a license of speech in an officer of the Holy See, they

naturally imagined, was not unauthorised by the assent of the Pope, as well as by the approbation of the people. Those who did not (like Stephen Colonna) despise words as wind shrank back from the task of punishing one whose voice might be the mere echo of the wishes of the pontiff. The dissensions of the nobles among each other were no less favourable to Rienzi. He attacked a body, the members of which had no union.

"It is not *my* duty to slay him!" said one.

"I am not the representative of the barons!" said another.

"If Stephen Colonna heeds him not, it would be absurd, as well as dangerous, in a meaner man to make himself the champion of the order!" said a third.

The Colonna smiled approval, when Rienzi denounced an Orsini,—an Orsini laughed aloud, when the eloquence burst over a Colonna. The lesser nobles were well pleased to hear attacks upon both: while, on the other hand, the Bishop, by the long impunity of Rienzi, had taken courage to sanction the conduct of his fellow-officer. He affected, indeed, at times, to blame the excess of his fervour, but it was always accompanied by the praises of his honesty; and the approbation of the Pope's Vicar confirmed the impression of the nobles as to the approbation of the Pope. Thus, from the very rashness of his enthusiasm had grown his security and success.

Still, however, when the barons had a little recovered from the stupor into which Rienzi had cast them, they looked round to each other; and their looks confessed their sense of the insolence of the orator, and the affront offered to themselves.

"*Per fede!*" quoth Reginaldo di Orsini, "this is past bearing,—the plebeian has gone too far!"

"Look at the populace below! how they murmur and gape,—and how their eyes sparkle—and what looks they bend at us!" said Luca di Savelli to his mortal enemy, Castruccio Malatesta: the sense of a common danger united in one moment, but only for a moment, the enmity of years.

"Diavolo!" muttered Raselli (Nina's father) to a baron, equally poor, "but the clerk has truth in his lips. 'Tis a pity he is not noble."

"What a clever brain marred!" said a Florentine merchant. "That man might be something, if he were sufficiently rich."

Adrian and Montreal were silent: the first seemed lost in thought,—the last was watching the various effects produced upon the audience.

"Silence!" proclaimed the officers. "Silence, for my Lord Vicar."

At this announcement, every eye turned to Raimond, who, rising with much clerical importance, thus addressed the assembly :—

"Although, Barons and Citizens of Rome,—my well-beloved flock, and children,—I, no more than yourselves, anticipated the exact nature of the address ye have just heard,—and, albeit, I cannot feel unalloyed contentment at the manner, nor, I may say, at the whole matter of that fervent exhortation—*yet* (laying great emphasis on the last word), I cannot suffer you to depart without adding to the prayers of our Holy Father's servant, those, also, of his Holiness's spiritual representative. It is true! the Jubilee approaches! The Jubilee approaches—and yet our roads, even to the gates of Rome, are infested with murderous and godless ruffians! What pilgrim can venture across the Apennines to worship at the altars of St. Peter? The Jubilee approaches: what scandal shall it be to Rome if these shrines be without pilgrims—if the timid recoil from, if the bold fall victims to, the dangers of the way! Wherefore, I pray you all, citizens and chiefs alike,—I pray you all to lay aside those unhappy dissensions which have so long consumed the strength of our sacred city; and, uniting with each other, in the ties of amity and brotherhood, to form a blessed league against the marauders of the road. I see amongst you, my Lords, many of the boasts and pillars of the state; but, alas! I think with grief and dismay on the causeless and idle hatred that has grown up between you!—a scandal to our city, and reflecting, let me add, my Lords, no honour on your faith as Christians, nor on your dignity as defenders of the Church."

Amongst the inferior nobles—along the seats of the judges and the men of letters—through the vast concourse of the people—ran a loud murmur of approbation at these words. The greater

barons looked proudly, but not contemptuously, at the countenance of the prelate, and preserved a strict and unrevealing silence.

"In this holy spot," continued the Bishop, "let me beseech you to bury those fruitless animosities which have already cost enough of blood and treasure; and let us quit these walls with one common determination to evince our courage and display our chivalry only against our universal foes;—those ruffians who lay waste our fields, and infest our public ways,—the foes alike of the people we should protect, and the God whom we should serve!"

The Bishop resumed his seat; the nobles looked at each other without reply; the people began to whisper loudly among themselves; when, after a short pause, Adrian di Castello rose:

"Pardon me, my Lords, and you, reverend Father, if I, inexperienced in years and of little mark or dignity amongst you, presume to be the first to embrace the proposal we have just heard. Willingly do I renounce all ancient cause of enmity with any of my compeers. Fortunately for me, my long absence from Rome has swept from my remembrance the feuds and rivalries familiar to my early youth; and in this noble conclave I see but one man (glancing at Martino di Porto, who sat sullenly looking down) against whom I have, at any time, deemed it a duty to draw my sword; the gage that I once cast to that noble is yet, I rejoice to think, unredeemed. I withdraw it. Henceforth my only foes shall be the foes of Rome!"

"Nobly spoken!" said the Bishop, aloud.

"And," continued Adrian, casting down his glove amongst the nobles, "I throw, my Lords, the gage, thus resumed, amongst you all, in challenge to a wider rivalry, and a more noble field. I invite any man to vie with me in the zeal that he shall show to restore tranquillity to our roads, and order to our state. It is a contest in which, if I be vanquished with reluctance, I will yield the prize without envy. In ten days from this time, reverend Father, I will raise forty horsemen-at-arms, ready to obey whatever orders shall be agreed upon for the security of the Roman state. And you, O Romans, dismiss, I pray you, from your minds, those eloquent invectives against your fellow-citizens

which ye have lately heard. All of us, of what rank soever, may have shared in the excesses of these unhappy times; let us endeavour not to avenge nor to imitate, but to reform and to unite. And may the people hereafter find that the true boast of a patrician is, that his power the better enables him to serve his country."

"Brave words!" quoth the smith, sneeringly.

"If they were all like him!" said the smith's neighbour.

"He has helped the nobles out of a dilemma," said Pandulfo.

"He has shown grey wit under young hairs," said an aged Malatesta.

"You have turned the tide, but not stemmed it, noble Adrian," whispered the ever-boding Montreal, as, amidst the murmurs of the general approbation, the young Colonna resumed his seat.

"How mean you?" said Adrian.

"That your soft words, like all patrician conciliations, have come too late."

Not another noble stirred, though they felt, perhaps, disposed to join in the general feeling of amnesty, and appeared, by signs and whispers, to applaud the speech of Adrian. They were too habituated to the ungracefulness of an unlettered pride, to bow themselves to address conciliating language either to the people or their foes. And Raimond, glancing round, and not willing that their unseemly silence should be long remarked, rose at once, to give it the best construction in his power.

"My son, thou has spoken as a patriot and a Christian; by the approving silence of your peers we all feel that they share your sentiments. Break we up the meeting—its end is obtained. The manner of our proceeding against the leagued robbers of the road requires maturer consideration elsewhere. This day shall be an epoch in our history."

"It shall," quoth Cecco del Vecchio, gruffly, between his teeth.

"Children, my blessing upon you all!" concluded the Vicar, spreading his arms.

And in a few minutes more the crowd poured from the church. The different servitors and flag-bearers ranged themselves on the steps without, each train anxious for their master's

precedence; and the nobles, gravely collecting in small knots, in the which was no mixture of rival blood, followed the crowd down the aisles. Soon rose again the din, and the noise, and the wrangling, and the oaths, of the hostile bands, as, with pain and labour, the Vicar's officers marshalled them in "order most disorderly."

But so true were Montreal's words to Adrian, that the populace already half forgot the young noble's generous appeal, and were only bitterly commenting on the ungracious silence of his brother Lords. What, too, to them was this crusade against the robbers of the road? They blamed the good Bishop for not saying boldly to the nobles—"Ye are the first robbers we must march against!" The popular discontents had gone far beyond palliatives; they had arrived at that point when the people longed less for reform than change. There are times when a revolution cannot be warded off; it must come—come alike by resistance or by concession. Woe to that race in which a revolution produces no fruits!—in which the thunderbolt smites the high place, but does not purify the air! To suffer in vain is often the lot of the noblest individuals; but when a People suffer in vain, let them curse themselves!

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMBITIOUS CITIZEN, AND THE AMBITIOUS SOLDIER.

THE Bishop of Orvietto lingered last, to confer with Rienzi, who awaited him in the recesses of the Lateran. Raimond had the penetration not to be seduced into believing that the late scene could effect any reformation amongst the nobles, heal their divisions, or lead them actively against the infestors of the Campagna. But, as he detailed to Rienzi all that had occurred subsequent to the departure of that hero of the scene, he concluded with saying:—

"You will perceive from this, one good result will be produced: the first armed dissension—the first fray among the

nobles—will seem like a breach of promise; and, to the people and to the Pope, a reasonable excuse for despairing of all amendment amongst the Barons,—an excuse which will sanction the efforts of the first, and the approval of the last.”

“For such a fray we shall not long wait,” answered Rienzi.

“I believe the prophecy,” answered Raimond, smiling; “at present all runs well. Go you with us homeward?”

“Nay, I think it better to tarry here till the crowd is entirely dispersed; for if they were to see me, in their present excitement, they might insist on some rash and hasty enterprise. Besides, my Lord,” added Rienzi, “with an ignorant people, however honest and enthusiastic, this rule must be rigidly observed—stale not your presence by custom. Never may men like me, who have no external rank, appear amongst the crowd, save on those occasions when the mind is itself a rank.”

“That is true, as you have no train,” answered Raimond, thinking of his own well-liveried menials. “Adieu, then! we shall meet soon.”

“Ay, at Philippi, my Lord. Reverend Father, your blessing!”

It was some time subsequent to this conference that Rienzi quitted the sacred edifice. As he stood on the steps of the church—now silent and deserted—the hour that precedes the brief twilight of the South lent its magic to the view. There he beheld the sweeping arches of the mighty Aqueduct extending far along the scene, and backed by the distant and purpled hills. Before—to the right—rose the gate which took its Roman name from the Cœlian Mount, at whose declivity it yet stands. Beyond—from the height of the steps—he saw the villages scattered through the grey Campagna, whitening in the sloped sun; and in the furthest distance the mountain shadows began to darken over the roofs of the ancient Tusculum, and the second Alban¹ city, which yet rises, in desolate neglect, above the vanished palaces of Pompey and Domitian.

The Roman stood absorbed and motionless for some moments, gazing on the scene, and inhaling the sweet balm of the

¹ The first Alba—the Alba Longa—whose origin Fable ascribes to Ascanius, was destroyed by Tullus Hostilius. The second Alba, or modern Albano, was erected on the plain below the ancient town, a little before the time of Nero.

mellow air It was the soft spring-time—the season of flowers, and green leaves, and whispering winds—the pastoral May of Italia's poets : but hushed was the voice of song on the banks of the Tiber—the reeds gave music no more. From the sacred Mount in which Saturn held his home, the Dryad and the Nymph, and Italy's native Sylvan, were gone for ever. Rienzi's original nature—its enthusiasm—its veneration for the past—its love of the beautiful and the great—that very attachment to the graces and pomp which give so florid a character to the harsh realities of life, and which power afterwards too luxuriantly developed ; the exuberance of thoughts and fancies, which poured itself from his lips in so brilliant and inexhaustible a flood—all bespoke those intellectual and imaginative biases, which, in calmer times, might have raised him in literature to a more indisputable eminence than that to which action can ever lead ; and something of such consciousness crossed his spirit at that moment.

“Happier had it been for me,” thought he, “had I never looked out from my own heart upon the world. I had all within me that makes contentment of the present, because I had that which can make me forget the present. I had the power to re-people—to create : the legends and dreams of old—the divine faculty of verse, in which the beautiful superfluities of the heart can pour themselves—these were mine ! Petrarch chose wisely for himself ! To address the world, but from without the world ; to persuade—to excite—to command,—for these are the aim and glory of ambition ;—but to shun its tumult and its toil ! His the quiet cell which he fills with the shapes of beauty—the solitude, from which he can banish the evil times whereon we are fallen, but in which he can dream back the great hearts and the glorious epochs of the past. For me—to what cares I am wedded ! to what labours I am bound ! what instruments I must use ! what disguises I must assume ! to tricks and artifice I must bow my pride !—base are my enemies—uncertain my friends ; and verily, in this struggle with blinded and mean men, the soul itself becomes warped and dwarfish. Patient and darkling, the Means creep through caves and the soiling mire, to gain at last the light which is the End.”

In these reflections there was a truth, the whole gloom and sadness of which the Roman had not yet experienced. However august be the object we propose to ourselves, every less worthy path we take to insure it distorts the mental sight of our ambition; and the means, by degrees, abase the end to their own standard. This is the true misfortune of a man nobler than his age—that the instruments he must use soil himself: half he reforms his times; but half, too, the times will corrupt the reformer. His own craft undermines his safety;—the people, whom he himself accustoms to a false excitement, perpetually crave it; and when their ruler ceases to seduce their fancy, he falls their victim. The reform he makes by these means is hollow and momentary—it is swept away with himself: it was but the trick—the show—the wasted genius of a conjuror; the curtain falls—the magic is over—the cup and balls are kicked aside. Better one slow step in enlightenment,—which being made by the reason of a whole people, cannot recede,—than these sudden flashes in the depth of the general night, which the darkness, by contrast doubly dark, swallows up everlastingly again!

As slowly and musingly Rienzi turned to quit the church, he felt a light touch upon his shoulder.

“Fair evening to you, Sir Scholar,” said a frank voice.

“To you I return the courtesy,” answered Rienzi, gazing upon the person who thus suddenly accosted him, and in whose white cross and martial bearing the reader recognises the Knight of St. John.

“You know me not, I think?” said Montreal; “but that matters little, we may easily commence our acquaintance: for me, indeed, I am fortunate enough to have made myself already acquainted with you.”

“Possibly we have met elsewhere, at the house of one of those nobles to whose rank you seem to belong?”

“Belong! no, not exactly!” returned Montreal, proudly, “High-born and great as your magnates deem themselves, I would not, while the mountains can yield one free spot for my footstep, change my place in the world’s many grades for theirs. To the brave, there is but one sort of plebeian, and that is the coward. But you, sage Rienzi,” continued the Knight, in a gayer

tone, "I have seen in more stirring scenes than the hall of a Roman Baron."

Rienzi glanced keenly at Montreal, who met his eye with an open brow.

"Yes!" resumed the Knight—"but let us walk on; suffer me for a few moments to be your companion. Yes! I have listened to you—the other eve, when you addressed the populace, and to-day, when you rebuked the nobles; and at midnight, too, not long since, when (your ear, fair Sir!—lower, it is a secret!)—at midnight, too, when you administered the oath of brotherhood to the bold conspirators on the ruined Aventine!"

As he concluded, the Knight drew himself aside to watch, upon Rienzi's countenance, the effect which his words might produce.

A slight tremor passed over the frame of the conspirator—for so, unless the conspiracy succeed, would Rienzi be termed, by others than Montreal: he turned abruptly round to confront the Knight, and placed his hand involuntarily on his sword, but presently relinquished the grasp.

"Ha!" said the Roman, slowly, "if this be true, fall Rome! There is treason even among the free!"

"No treason, brave Sir!" answered Montreal; "I possess thy secret—but none have betrayed it to me."

"And is it as friend or foe that thou hast learned it?"

"That as it may be," returned Montreal, carelessly. "Enough at present, that I could send thee to the gibbet, if I said but the word,—to show my power to be thy foe; enough, that I have not done it, to prove my disposition to be thy friend."

"Thou mistakest, stranger! that man does not live who could shed my blood in the streets of Rome! The gibbet! Little dost thou know of the power which surrounds Rienzi."

These words were said with some scorn and bitterness; but, after a moment's pause, Rienzi resumed, more calmly:—

"By the cross on thy mantle, thou belongest to one of the proudest orders of knighthood: thou art a foreigner, and a cavalier. What generous sympathies can convert thee into a friend of the Roman people?"

"Cola di Rienzi," returned Montreal, "the sympathies that unite us are those which unite all men who, by their own efforts, rise

above the herd. True, I was born noble—but powerless and poor: at my beck now move, from city to city, the armed instruments of authority: my breath is the law of thousands. This empire I have not inherited; I won it by a cool brain and a fearless arm. Know me for Walter de Montreal; is it not a name that speaks a spirit kindred to thine own? Is not ambition a common sentiment between us? I do not marshal soldiers for gain only, though men have termed me avaricious—nor butcher peasants for the love of blood, though men have called me cruel. Arms and wealth are the sinews of power; it is power that I desire;—thou, bold Rienzi, strugglest thou not for the same? Is it the rank breath of the garlic-chewing mob—is it the whispered envy of schoolmen—is it the hollow mouthing of boys who call thee patriot and freeman, words to trick the ear—that will content thee? These are but *thy* instruments to *power*. Have I spoken truly?"

Whatever distaste Rienzi might conceive at this speech he masked effectually. "Certes," said he, "it would be in vain, renowned Captain, to deny that I seek but that power of which thou speakest. But what union can there be between the ambition of a Roman citizen and the leader of paid armies that take their cause only according to their hire—to-day, fight for liberty in Florence—to-morrow, for tyranny in Bologna? Pardon my frankness; for in this age that is deemed no disgrace which I impute to thy armies. Valour and generalship are held to consecrate any cause they distinguish; and he who is the master of princes, may be well honoured by them as their equal."

"We are entering into a less deserted quarter of the town," said the Knight; "is there no secret place—no Aventine—in this direction, where we can confer?"

"Hush!" replied Rienzi, cautiously looking round. "I thank thee, noble Montreal, for the hint; nor may it be well for us to be seen together. Wilt thou deign to follow me to my home by the Palatine Bridge?¹ there we can converse undisturbed and secure."

¹ The picturesque ruins shown at this day as having once been the habitation of the celebrated Cola di Rienzi, were long asserted by the antiquaries to have belonged to another Cola or Nicola. I believe, however, that the dispute has been lately decided; and, indeed, no one but an antiquary, and that a Roman one, could suppose that there were two Colas to whom the inscription on the house would apply.

"Be it so," said Montreal, falling back.

With a quick and hurried step, Rienzi passed through the town, in which, wherever he was discovered, the scattered citizens saluted him with marked respect; and, turning through a labyrinth of dark alleys, as if to shun the more public thoroughfares, arrived at length at a broad space near the river. The first stars of night shone down on the ancient temple of Fortuna Virilis, which the chances of Time had already converted into the Church of St. Mary of Egypt; and facing the twice-hallowed edifice stood the house of Rienzi.

"It is a fair omen to have my mansion facing the ancient Temple of Fortune," said Rienzi, smiling, as Montreal followed the Roman into the chamber I have already described.

"Yet Valour need never pray to Fortune," said the Knight; "the first commands the last."

Long was the conference between these two men, the most enterprising of their age. Meanwhile, let me make the reader somewhat better acquainted with the character and designs of Montreal, than the hurry of events has yet permitted him to become.

Walter de Montreal, generally known in the chronicles of Italy by the designation of Fra Moreale, had passed into Italy—a bold adventurer, worthy to become a successor of those roving Normans (from one of the most eminent of whom, by the mother's side, he claimed descent) who had formerly played so strange a part in the chivalric errantry of Europe,—realizing the fables of Amadis and Palmerin—(each knight, in himself a host)—winning territories and oversetting thrones; acknowledging no laws save those of knighthood; never confounding themselves with the tribes amongst which they settled; incapable of becoming citizens, and scarcely contented with aspiring to be kings. At that time, Italy was the India of all those well-born and penniless adventurers who, like Montreal, had inflamed their imagination by the ballads and legends of the Roberts and the Godfreys of old; who had trained themselves from youth to manage the bar, and bear, through the heat of summer, the weight of arms; and who, passing into an effeminate and distracted land, had only to exhibit bravery in order to command

wealth. It was considered no disgrace for some powerful chieftain to collect together a band of these hardy aliens,—to subsist amidst the mountains on booty and pillage,—to make war upon tyrant or republic, as interest suggested, and to sell, at enormous stipends, the immunities of peace. Sometimes they hired themselves to one state to protect it against the other; and the next year beheld them in the field against their former employers. These bands of Northern stipendiaries assumed, therefore, a civil, as well as a military, importance; they were as indispensable to the safety of one state as they were destructive to the security of all. But five years before the present date, the Florentine Republic had hired the services of a celebrated leader of these foreign soldiers,—Gualtier, Duke of Athens. By acclamation, the people themselves had elected that warrior to the state of prince, or tyrant, of their state; before the year was completed, they revolted against his cruelties, or rather against his exactions,—for, despite all the boasts of their historians, they felt an attack on their purses more deeply than an assault on their liberties,—they had chased him from their city, and once more proclaimed themselves a Republic. The bravest, and most favoured of the soldiers of the Duke of Athens had been Walter de Montreal; he had shared the rise and the downfall of his chief. Amongst popular commotions, the acute and observant mind of the Knight of St. John had learned no mean civil experience; he had learned to sound a people—to know how far they would endure—to construe the signs of revolution—to be a reader of the times. After the downfall of the Duke of Athens, as a Free Companion, in other words a Freebooter, Montreal had augmented under the fierce Werner his riches and his renown. At present without employment worthy his spirit of enterprise and intrigue, the disordered and chiefless state of Rome had attracted him thither. In the league he had proposed to Colonna—in the suggestions he had made to the vanity of that Signor—his own object was to render his services indispensable—to constitute himself the head of the soldiery whom his proposed designs would render necessary to the ambition of the Colonna, could it be excited—and, in the vastness of his hardy genius for enterprise, he probably foresaw that the command of

such a force would be, in reality, the command of Rome ;—a counter-revolution might easily unseat the Colonna and elect himself to the principality. It had sometimes been the custom of Roman, as of other Italian States, to prefer for a chief magistrate, under the title of *Podesta*, a foreigner to a native. And Montreal hoped that he might possibly become to Rome what the Duke of Athens had been to Florence—an ambition he knew well enough to be above the gentleman of Provence, but not above the leader of an army. But, as we have already seen, his sagacity perceived at once that he could not move the aged head of the patricians to those hardy and perilous measures which were necessary to the attainment of supreme power. Contented with his present station, and taught moderation by his age and his past reverses, Stephen Colonna was not the man to risk a scaffold from the hope to gain a throne. The contempt which the old patrician professed for the people, and their idol, also taught the deep-thinking Montreal that, if the Colonna possessed not the ambition, neither did he possess the policy, requisite for empire. The Knight found his caution against Rienzi in vain, and he turned to Rienzi himself. Little cared the Knight of St. John which party were uppermost—prince or people—so that his own objects were attained ; in fact, he had studied the humours of a people, not in order to serve, but to rule them ; and, believing all men actuated by a similar ambition, he imagined that, whether a demagogue or a patrician reigned, the people were equally to be victims, and that the cry of “ Order ” on the one hand, or of “ Liberty ” on the other, was but the mere pretext by which the energy of one man sought to justify his ambition over the herd. Deeming himself one of the most honourable spirits of his age, he believed in no honour which *he* was unable to feel ; and, sceptic in virtue, was therefore credulous of vice.

But the boldness of his own nature inclined him, perhaps, rather to the adventurous Rienzi than to the self-complacent Colonna ; and he considered that to the safety of the first he and his armed minions might be even more necessary than to that of the last. At present his main object was to learn from Rienzi the exact strength which he possessed, and how far he was prepared for any actual revolt.

The acute Roman took care, on the one hand, how he betrayed to the Knight more than he yet knew, or disgusted him by apparent reserve on the other. Crafty as Montreal was, he possessed not that wonderful art of mastering others which was so pre-eminently the gift of the eloquent and profound Rienzi, and the difference between the grades of their intellect was visible in their present conference.

"I see," said Rienzi, "that amidst all the events which have lately smiled upon my ambition, none is so favourable as that which assures me of your countenance and friendship. In truth, I require some armed alliance. Would you believe it? our friends, so bold in private meetings, yet shrink from a public explosion. They fear not the patricians, but the soldiery of the patricians; for it is the remarkable feature in the Italian courage, that they have no terror for each other, but the casque and sword of a foreign hireling make them quail like deer."

"They will welcome gladly, then, the assurance that such hirelings shall be in their service—not against them; and as many as you desire for the revolution, so many shall you receive."

"But the pay and the conditions," said Rienzi, with his dry, sarcastic smile. "How shall we arrange the first, and what shall we hold to be the second?"

"That is an affair easily concluded," replied Montreal. "For me, to tell you frankly, the glory and excitement of so great a revulsion would alone suffice. I like to feel myself necessary to the completion of high events. For my men it is otherwise. Your first act will be to seize the revenues of the state. Well, whatever they amount to, the product of the first year, great or small, shall be divided amongst us. You the one half, and I and my men the other half."

"It is much," said Rienzi, gravely, and as if in calculation,— "but Rome cannot purchase her liberties too dearly. So be it then decided."

"Amen!—and now, then, what is your force? for these eighty or a hundred signors of the Aventine,—worthy men, doubtless,—scarce suffice for a revolt!"

Gazing cautiously round the room, the Roman placed his hand on Montreal's arm—

"Between you and me, it requires time to cement it. We shall be unable to stir these five weeks. I have too rashly anticipated the period. The corn is indeed cut, but I must now, by private adjuration and address, bind up the scattered sheaves."

"Five weeks," repeated Montreal; "that is far longer than I anticipated."

"What I desire," continued Rienzi, fixing his searching eyes upon Montreal, "is, that, in the meanwhile, we should preserve a profound calm,—we should remove every suspicion. I shall bury myself in my studies, and convoke no more meetings."

"Well——"

"And for yourself, noble Knight, might I venture to dictate, I would pray you to mix with the nobles—to profess for me and for the people the profoundest contempt—and to contribute to rock them yet more in the cradle of their false security. Meanwhile, you could quietly withdraw as many of the armed mercenaries as you influence from Rome, and leave the nobles without their only defenders. Collecting these hardy warriors in the recesses of the mountains, a day's march from hence, we may be able to summon them at need, and they shall appear at our gates, and in the midst of our rising—hailed as deliverers by the nobles, but in reality allies with the people. In the confusion and despair of our enemies at discovering their mistake, they will fly from the city."

"And its revenue and its empire will become the appanage of the hardy soldier and the intriguing demagogue!" cried Montreal, with a laugh.

"Sir Knight, the division shall be equal."

"Agreed!"

"And now, noble Montreal, a flask of our best vintage!" said Rienzi, changing his tone.

"You know the Provençals," answered Montreal, gaily.

The wine was brought, the conversation became free and familiar, and Montreal, whose craft was acquired, and whose frankness was natural, unwittingly committed his secret projects and ambition more nakedly to Rienzi than he had designed to do. They parted apparently the best of friends.

"By the way," said Rienzi, as they drained the last goblet, "Stephen Colonna betakes him to Corneto, with a convoy of corn, on the 19th. Will it not be as well if you join him? You can take that opportunity to whisper discontent to the mercenaries that accompany him on his mission, and induce them to our plan."

"I thought of that before," returned Montreal; "it shall be done. For the present, farewell!"

"His barb, and his sword,
And his lady, the peerless,
Are all that are prized
By Orlando the fearless.

"Success to the Norman,
The darling of story;
His glory is pleasure—
His pleasure is glory."

Chanting this rude ditty as he resumed his mantle, the Knight waved his hand to Rienzi, and departed.

Rienzi watched the receding form of his guest with an expression of hate and fear upon his countenance. "Give that man the power," he muttered, "and he may be a second Totila.¹ Methinks I see, in his griping and ferocious nature,—through all the gloss of its gaiety and knightly grace,—the very personification of our old Gothic foes. I trust I have lulled him! Verily, two suns could no more blaze in one hemisphere, than Walter de Montreal and Cola di Rienzi live in the same city. The star-seers tell us that we feel a secret and uncontrollable antipathy to those whose astral influences destine them to work us evil; such antipathy do I feel for yon fair-faced homicide. Cross not my path, Montreal!—cross not my path!"

With this soliloquy Rienzi turned within, and, retiring to his apartment, was seen no more that night.

¹ Innocent VI., some years afterwards, proclaimed Montreal to be *worse* than Totila.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROCESSION OF THE BARONS.—THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

IT was the morning of the 19th of May, the air was brisk and clear, and the sun, which had just risen, shone cheerily upon the glittering casques and spears of a gallant procession of armed horsemen, sweeping through the long and principal street of Rome. The neighing of the horses, the ringing of the hoofs, the dazzle of the armour, and the tossing to and fro of the standards, adorned with the proud insignia of the Colonna, presented one of the gay and brilliant spectacles peculiar to the middle ages.

At the head of the troop, on a stout palfrey, rode Stephen Colonna. At his right was the Knight of Provence, curbing, with an easy hand, a slight but fiery steed of the Arab race: behind him followed two squires, the one leading his war-horse, the other bearing his lance and helmet. At the left of Stephen Colonna rode Adrian, grave and silent, and replying only by monosyllables to the gay bavardage of the Knight of Provence. A considerable number of the flower of the Roman nobles followed the old Baron; and the train was closed by a serried troop of foreign horsemen, completely armed.

There was no crowd in the street,—the citizens looked with seeming apathy at the procession from their half-closed shops.

“Have these Romans no passion for shows?” asked Montreal; “if they could be more easily amused they would be more easily governed.”

“Oh, Rienzi, and such buffoons, amuse them. We do better,—we terrify!” replied Stephen.

“What sings the troubadour, Lord Adrian?” said Montreal.

“Smiles, false smiles, should form the school
For those who rise, and those who rule:
The brave they trick, the fair subdue,
Kings deceive, and States undo.
Smiles, false smiles!

“ ‘Frowns, true frowns, ourselves betray,
 The brave arouse, the fair dismay,
 Sting the pride, which blood must heal,
 Mix the bowl, and point the steel.
 Frowns, true frowns !”

“The lay is of France, Signor ; yet methinks it brings its wisdom from Italy ;—for the serpent-smile is your countrymen’s proper distinction, and the frown ill becomes them.”

“Sir Knight,” replied Adrian, sharply, and incensed at the taunt, “you foreigners have taught us how to frown :—a virtue sometimes.”

“But not wisdom, unless the hand could maintain what the brow menaced,” returned Montreal with haughtiness ; for he had much of the Frank vivacity which often overcame his prudence ; and he had conceived a secret pique against Adrian since their interview at Stephen’s palace.

“Sir Knight,” answered Adrian, colouring, “our conversation may lead to warmer words than I would desire to have with one who has rendered me so gallant a service.”

“Nay, then, let us go back to the troubadours,” said Montreal, indifferently. “Forgive me if I do not think highly, in general, of Italian honour or Italian valour ; *your* valour I acknowledge, for I have witnessed it, and valour and honour go together,—let that suffice !”

As Adrian was about to answer, his eye fell suddenly on the burly form of Cecco del Vecchio, who was leaning his bare and brawny arms over his anvil, and gazing, with a smile, upon the group. There was something in that smile which turned the current of Adrian’s thoughts, and which he could not contemplate without an unaccountable misgiving.

“A strong villain, that,” said Montreal, also eying the smith. “I should like to enlist him. Fellow !” cried he, aloud, “you have an arm that were as fit to wield the sword as to fashion it. Desert your anvil, and follow the fortunes of Fra Moreale !”

The smith nodded his head. “Signor Cavalier,” said he, gravely, “we poor men have no passion for war ; we want not to kill others—we desire only ourselves to live,—if you will let us !”

"By the Holy Mother, a slavish answer! But you Romans—"

"*Are slaves!*" interrupted the smith, turning away to the interior of his forge.

"The dog is mutinous!" said the old Colonna. And as the band swept on, the rude foreigners, encouraged by their leaders, had each some taunt or jest, uttered in a barbarous attempt at the southern *patois*, for the lazy giant, as he again appeared in front of his forge, leaning on his anvil as before, and betraying no sign of attention to his insultors, save by a heightened glow of his swarthy visage;—and so the gallant procession passed through the streets, and quitted the Eternal City.

There was a long interval of deep silence—of general calm—throughout the whole of Rome: the shops were still but half-opened; no man betook himself to his business; it was like the commencement of some holiday, when indolence precedes enjoyment.

About noon, a few small knots of men might be seen scattered about the streets, whispering to each other, but soon dispersing; and every now and then, a single passenger, generally habited in the long robes used by the men of letters, or in the more sombre garb of monks, passed hurriedly up the street towards the Church of St. Mary of Egypt, once the Temple of Fortune. Then, again, all was solitary and deserted. Suddenly, there was heard *the sound of a single trumpet!* It swelled—it gathered on the ear. Cecco del Vecchio looked up from his anvil! *A solitary horseman* paced slowly by the forge, and wound a long loud blast of the trumpet suspended round his neck, as he passed through the middle of the street. Then might you see a crowd, suddenly, and as by magic, appear emerging from every corner; the street became thronged with multitudes; but it was only by the tramp of their feet, and an indistinct and low murmur, that they broke the silence. Again the horseman wound his trump, and when the note ceased, he cried aloud—"Friends and Romans! to-morrow, at dawn of day, let each man find himself unarmed before the Church of St. Angelo. Cola di Rienzi convenes the Romans to provide

for the good state of Rome." A shout, that seemed to shake the bases of the seven hills, broke forth at the end of this brief exhortation; the horseman rode slowly on, and the crowd followed.—This was the commencement of the Revolution:

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONSPIRATOR BECOMES THE MAGISTRATE.

AT midnight, when the rest of the city seemed hushed in rest, lights were streaming from the windows of the Church of St. Angelo. Breaking from its echoing aisles, the long and solemn notes of sacred music stole at frequent intervals upon the air. Rienzi was praying within the church; thirty masses consumed the hours from night till morn, and all the sanction of religion was invoked to consecrate the enterprise of liberty.¹ The sun had long risen, and the crowd had long been assembled before the church door, and in vast streams along every street that led to it,—when the bell of the church tolled out long and merrily; and as it ceased, the voices of the choristers within chanted the following hymn, in which were somewhat strikingly, though barbarously, blended, the spirit of the classic patriotism with the fervour of religious zeal:—

THE ROMAN HYMN OF LIBERTY.

Let the mountains exult around!²
On her seven-hill'd throne renown'd,
Once more old Rome is crown'd!
Jubilate!

Sing out, O Vale and Wave!
Look up from each laurell'd grave,
Bright dust of the deathless brave!
Jubilate!

¹ In fact, I apprehend that if ever the life of Cola di Rienzi shall be written by a hand worthy of the task, it will be shown that a strong religious feeling was blended with the political enthusiasm of the people,—the religious feeling of a premature and crude reformation, the legacy of Arnold of Brescia. It was not, however, one excited against the priests, but favoured by them. The principal conventual orders declared for the Revolution.

² "Exultent in circuito vestro montes," &c.—Let the mountains exult around! So begins Rienzi's letter to the Senate and Roman people: preserved by Hocsemius.

Pale Vision, what art thou?—Lo,
 From Time's dark deeps,
 Like a wind, It sweeps,
 Like a Wind, when the tempests blow ;

A shadowy form—as a giant ghost—
 It stands in the midst of the armed host !
 The dead man's shroud on Its awful limbs ;
 And the gloom of Its presence the day-light dims ;
 And the trembling world looks on aghast—
All hail to the SOUL OF THE MIGHTY PAST !
 Hail ! all hail !

As we speak—as we hallow—It moves, It breathes ;
 From its clouded crest bud the laurel wreaths—
As a Sun that leaps up from the arms of Night,
 The shadow takes shape, and the gloom takes light.
 Hail ! all hail !

THE SOUL OF THE PAST, again
 To its ancient home,
 In the hearts of Rome,
Hath come to resume its reign !

O Fame, with a prophet's voice,
 Bids the ends of the Earth rejoice !
 Wherever the Proud are Strong,
 And Right is oppress'd by Wrong ;—
 Wherever the day dim shines
 Through the cell where the captive pines ;—
 Go forth, with a trumpet's sound !
 And tell to the Nations round—
 On the Hills which the Heroes trod—
 In the shrines of the Saints of God—
 In the Cæsars' hall, and the Martyrs' prison—
 That the slumber is broke, and the Sleeper arisen !
 That the reign of the Goth and the Vandal is o'er ;
 And Earth feels the tread of **THE ROMAN** once more.

As the hymn ended, the gate of the church opened ; the crowd gave way on either side, and, preceded by three of the young nobles of the inferior order, bearing standards of allegorical design, depicting the triumph of Liberty, Justice, and Concord, forth issued Rienzi, clad in complete armour, the helmet alone excepted. His face was pale with watching and intense excitement—but stern, grave, and solemnly composed ; and its expression so repelled any vociferous and vulgar burst of feeling, that those who beheld it hushed the shout on their lips, and stilled, by a simultaneous cry of reproof, the gratulations of the crowd behind. Side by side with Rienzi moved Raimond, Bishop of Orvietto ; and behind, marching two by

two, followed a hundred men-at-arms. In complete silence the procession began its way, until, as it approached the Capitol, the awe of the crowd gradually vanished, and thousands upon thousands of voices rent the air with shouts of exultation and joy.

Arrived at the foot of the great staircase, which then made the principal ascent to the square of the Capitol, the procession halted; and as the crowd filled up that vast space in front—adorned and hallowed by many of the most majestic columns of the temples of old—Rienzi addressed the Populace, whom he had suddenly elevated into a People.

He depicted forcibly the servitude and misery of the citizens—the utter absence of all law—the want even of common security to life and property. He declared that, undaunted by the peril he incurred, he devoted his life to the regeneration of their common country; and he solemnly appealed to the people to assist the enterprise, and at once to sanction and consolidate the Revolution by an established code of law and a Constitutional Assembly. He then ordered the chart and outline of the Constitution he proposed, to be read by the Herald to the multitude.

It created,—or rather revived, with new privileges and powers,—a Representative Assembly of Councillors. It proclaimed, as its first law, one that seems simple enough to our happier times, but never hitherto executed at Rome: Every wilful homicide, of whatever rank, was to be punished by death. It enacted, that no private noble or citizen should be suffered to maintain fortifications and garrisons in the city or the country; that the gates and bridges of the State should be under the control of whomsoever should be elected Chief Magistrate. It forbade all harbour of brigands, mercenaries, and robbers, on payment of a thousand marks of silver; and it made the Barons who possessed the neighbouring territories responsible for the safety of the roads, and the transport of merchandise. It took under the protection of the State the widow and the orphan. It appointed, in each of the quarters of the city, an armed militia, whom the tolling of the bell of the Capitol, at any hour, was to assemble to the protection of the State. It ordained, that in each harbour of the

coast, a vessel should be stationed for the safeguard of commerce. It decreed the sum of one hundred florins to the heirs of every man who died in the defence of Rome; and it devoted the public revenues to the service and protection of the State.

Such, moderate at once and effectual, was the outline of the New Constitution; and it may amuse the reader to consider how great must have been the previous disorders of the city, when the common and elementary provisions of civilisation and security made the character of the code proposed, and the limit of a popular revolution.

The most rapturous shouts followed this sketch of the New Constitution: and, amidst the clamour, up rose the huge form of Cecco del Vecchio. Despite his condition, he was a man of great importance at the present crisis: his zeal and his courage, and, perhaps, still more, his brute passion and stubborn prejudice, had made him popular. The lower order of mechanics looked to him as their head and representative; out, then, he spake loud and fearlessly,—speaking well, because his mind was full of what he had to say.

“Countrymen and Citizens!—This New Constitution meets with your approbation—so it ought. But what are good laws, if we do not have good men to execute them? Who can execute a law so well as the man who designs it? If you ask me to give you a notion how to make a good shield, and my notion pleases you, would you ask me, or another smith, to make it for you? If you ask another, he may make a good shield, but it would not be the same as that which I should have made, and the description of which contented you. Cola di Rienzi has proposed a Code of Law that shall be our shield. Who should see that the shield become what he proposes, but Cola di Rienzi? Romans! I suggest that Cola di Rienzi be intrusted by the people with the authority, by whatsoever name he pleases, of carrying the New Constitution into effect;—and whatever be the means, we, the People, will bear him harmless.”

“Long life to Rienzi!—long live Cecco del Vecchio! He hath spoken well!—none but the Law-maker shall be the Governor!”

Such were the acclamations which greeted the ambitious heart of the Scholar. The voice of the people invested him with the supreme power. He had created a Commonwealth—to become, if he desired it, a Despot!

CHAPTER VII.

LOOKING AFTER THE HALTER WHEN THE MARE IS STOLEN.

WHILE such were the events at Rome, a servitor of Stephen Colonna was already on his way to Corneto. The astonishment with which the old Baron received the intelligence may be easily imagined. He lost not a moment in convening his troop; and, while in all the bustle of departure, the Knight of St. John abruptly entered his presence. His mien had lost its usual frank composure.

“How is this?” said he, hastily; “a revolt?—Rienzi sovereign of Rome?—can the news be believed?”

“It is too true!” said Colonna, with a bitter smile. “Where shall we hang him on our return?”

“Talk not so wildly, Sir Baron,” replied Montreal, discourteously; “Rienzi is stronger than you think for. I know what men are, and you only know what noblemen are! Where is your kinsman, Adrian?”

“He is here, noble Montreal,” said Stephen, shrugging his shoulders, with a half-disdainful smile at the rebuke, which he thought it more prudent not to resent; “he is here! see him enter!”

“You have heard the news?” exclaimed Montreal.

“I have.”

“And despise the revolution?”

“I fear it!”

“Then you have some sense in you. But this is none of my affair: I will not interrupt your consultations. Adieu for the present!” and, ere Stephen could prevent him, the Knight had quitted the chamber.

“What means this demagogue?” Montreal muttered to

himself. "Would he trick me?—has he got rid of my presence in order to monopolise all the profit of the enterprise? I fear me so!—the cunning Roman! We northern warriors could never compete with the intellect of these Italians but for their cowardice. But what shall be done? I have already bid Rodolf communicate with the brigands, and they are on the eve of departure from their present lord. Well! let it be so! Better that I should first break the power of the Barons, and then make my own terms, sword in hand, with the plebeian. And if I fail in this,—sweet Adeline! I shall see thee again!—that is some comfort!—and Louis of Hungary will bid high for the arm and brain of Walter de Montreal. What, ho! Rodolf!" he exclaimed aloud, as the sturdy form of the trooper, half-armed and half-intoxicated, reeled along the court-yard. "Knave! art thou drunk at this hour?"

"Drunk or sober," answered Rodolf, bending low, "I am at thy bidding."

"Well said!—are thy friends ripe for the saddle?"

"Eighty of them, already tired of idleness and the dull air of Rome, will fly wherever Sir Walter de Montreal wishes."

"Hasten, then,—bid them mount; we go not hence with the Colonna—we leave while they are yet talking!—Bid my squires attend me!"

And when Stephen Colonna was settling himself on his palfrey, he heard, for the first time, that the Knight of Provence, Rodolf the trooper, and eighty of the stipendiaries, had already departed,—whither, none knew.

"To precede us to Rome! gallant barbarian!" said Colonna. "Sirs, on!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ATTACK—THE RETREAT—THE ELECTION—AND THE ADHESION.

ARRIVING at Rome, the company of the Colonna found the gates barred, and the walls manned. Stephen bade advance his trumpeters, with one of his captains, imperiously to demand admittance.

"We have orders," replied the chief of the town-guard, "to admit none who bear arms, flags, or trumpets. Let the Lords Colonna dismiss their train, and they are welcome."

"Whose are these insolent mandates?" asked the captain.

"Those of the Lord Bishop of Orvietto and Cola di Rienzi, joint protectors of the Buono Stato."¹

The captain of the Colonna returned to his chief with these tidings. The rage of Stephen was indescribable. "Go back," he cried, as soon as he could summon voice, "and say, that, if the gates are not forthwith opened to me and mine, the blood of the plebeians be on their own head. As for Raimond, Vicars of the Pope have high spiritual authority, none temporal. Let him prescribe a fast, and he shall be obeyed; but, for the rash Rienzi, say that Stephen Colonna will seek him in the Capitol to-morrow, for the purpose of throwing him out of the highest window."

These messages the envoy failed not to deliver.

The captain of the Romans was equally stern in his reply.

"Declare to your Lord," said he, "that Rome holds him and his as rebels and traitors; and that the moment you regain your troop, our archers receive our command to draw their bows—in the name of the Pope, the City, and the Liberator."

This threat was executed to the letter; and ere the old Baron had time to draw up his men in the best array, the gates were thrown open, and a well-armed, if undisciplined, multitude poured forth, with fierce shouts, clashing their arms, and advancing the azure banners of the Roman State. So desperate their charge, and so great their numbers, that the Barons, after a short and tumultuous conflict, were driven back, and chased by their pursuers for more than a mile from the walls of the city.

As soon as the Barons recovered their disorder and dismay, a hasty council was held, at which various and contradictory opinions were loudly urged. Some were for departing on the instant to Palestrina, which belonged to the Colonna, and possessed an almost inaccessible fortress. Others were for dispersing, and entering peaceably, and in detached parties, through the other gates. Stephen Colonna—himself incensed

¹ Good Estate.

and disturbed from his usual self-command—was unable to preserve his authority ; Luca di Savelli,¹ a timid, though treacherous and subtle man, already turned his horse's head, and summoned his men to follow him to his castle in Romagna, when the old Colonna bethought himself of a method by which to keep his band from a disunion that he had the sense to perceive would prove fatal to the common cause. He proposed that they should at once repair to Palestrina, and there fortify themselves ; while one of the chiefs should be selected to enter Rome alone, and apparently submissive, to examine the strength of Rienzi ; and with the discretionary power to resist if possible, —or to make the best terms he could for the admission of the rest.

“And who,” asked Savelli, sneeringly, “will undertake this dangerous mission ? Who, unarmed and alone, will expose himself to the rage of the fiercest populace of Italy, and the caprice of a demagogue in the first flush of his power ?”

The Barons and the Captains looked at each other in silence. Savelli laughed.

Hitherto Adrian had taken no part in the conference, and but little in the previous contest. He now came to the support of his kinsman.

“Signors !” said he, “I will undertake this mission,—but on mine own account, independently of yours ; free to act as I may think best, for the dignity of a Roman noble, and the interests of a Roman citizen ; free to raise my standard on mine own tower, or to yield fealty to the new estate.”

“Well said !” cried the old Colonna, hastily. “Heaven forbid we should enter Rome as foes, if to enter it as friends be yet allowed us ! What say ye, gentles ?”

“A more worthy choice could not be selected,” said Savelli ; “but I should scarce deem it possible that a Colonna could think there was an option between resistance and fealty to this upstart revolution.”

“Of that, Signor, I will judge for myself ; if you demand an agent for yourselves, choose another. I announce to ye frankly,

¹ The more correct orthography were Luca di Savello, but the one in the text is preserved as more familiar to the English reader.

that I have seen enough of other states to think the recent condition of Rome demanded some redress. Whether Rienzi and Raimond be worthy of the task they have assumed, I know not."

Savelli was silent. The old Colonna seized the word.

"To Palestrina, then!—are ye all agreed on this? At the worst, or at the best, we should not be divided! On this condition alone I hazard the safety of my kinsman!"

The Barons murmured a little among themselves;—the expediency of Stephen's proposition was evident, and they at length assented to it.

Adrian saw them depart, and then, attended only by his squire, slowly rode towards a more distant entrance into the city. On arriving at the gates, his name was demanded—he gave it freely.

"Enter, my Lord," said the warder, "our orders were to admit all that came unarmed and unattended. But to the Lord Adrian di Castello, alone, we had a special injunction to give the honours due to a citizen and a friend."

Adrian, a little touched by this implied recollection of friendship, now rode through a long line of armed citizens, who saluted him respectfully as he passed, and, as he returned the salutation with courtesy, a loud and approving shout followed his horse's steps.

So, save by one attendant, alone, and in peace, the young patrician proceeded leisurely through the long streets, empty and deserted;—for nearly one half of the inhabitants were assembled at the walls, and nearly the other half were engaged in a more peaceful duty,—until, penetrating the interior, the wide and elevated space of the Capitol broke upon his sight. The sun was slowly setting over an immense multitude that overspread the spot, and high above a scaffold raised in the centre, shone, to the western ray, the great Gonfalon of Rome, studded with silver stars.

Adrian reined in his steed. "This," though the, "is scarcely the hour thus publicly to confer with Rienzi; yet fain would I, mingled with the crowd, judge how far his power is supported, and in what manner it is borne," Musing a little, he withdrew.

into one of the obscurer streets, then wholly deserted, surrendered his horse to his squire, and, borrowing of the latter his morion and long mantle, passed to one of the more private entrances of the Capitol, and, enveloped in his cloak, stood—one of the crowd—intent upon all that followed.

“And what,” he asked of a plainly dressed citizen, “is the cause of this assembly?”

“Heard you not the proclamation?” returned the other in some surprise. “Do you not know that the Council of the City and the Guilds of the Artizans have passed a vote to proffer to Rienzi the title of king of Rome?”

The Knight of the Emperor, to whom belonged that august dignity, drew back in dismay.

“And,” resumed the citizen, “this assembly of all the lesser Barons, Councillors, and Artificers, is convened to hear the answer.”

“Of course it will be assent?”

“I know not—there are strange rumours; hitherto the Liberator has concealed his sentiments.”

At that instant a loud flourish of martial music announced the approach of Rienzi. The crowd tumultuously divided, and presently, from the Palace of the Capitol to the scaffold, passed Rienzi, still in complete armour, save the helmet, and with him, in all the pomp of his episcopal robes, Raimond of Orvietto.

As soon as Rienzi had ascended the platform, and was thus made visible to the whole concourse, no words can suffice to paint the enthusiasm of the scene—the shouts, the gestures, the tears, the sobs, the wild laughter, in which the sympathy of those lively and susceptible children of the South broke forth. The windows and balconies of the Palace were thronged with the wives and daughters of the lesser Barons and more opulent citizens; and Adrian, with a slight start, beheld amongst them, —pale—agitated—tearful,—the lovely face of his Irene—a face that even thus would have outshone all present, but for one by her side, whose beauty the emotion of the hour only served to embellish. The dark, large, and flashing eyes of Nina di Raselli just bedewed, were fixed proudly on the hero of her choice: and pride, even more than joy, gave a richer carnation to her cheek.

and the presence of a queen to her noble and rounded form. The setting sun poured its full glory over the spot ; the bared heads—the animated faces of the crowd—the grey and vast mass of the Capitol ; and, not far from the side of Rienzi, it brought into a strange and startling light the sculptured form of a colossal Lion of Basalt,¹ which gave its name to a staircase leading to the Capitol. It was an old Egyptian relic,—vast, worn, and grim ; some symbol of a vanished creed, to whose face the sculptor had imparted something of the aspect of the human countenance. And this producing the effect probably sought, gave at all times a mystic, preternatural, and fearful expression to the stern features, and to that solemn and hushed repose, which is so peculiarly the secret of Egyptian sculpture. The awe which this colossal and frowning image was calculated to convey, was felt yet more deeply by the vulgar, because “the Staircase of the Lion” was the wonted place of the state executions, as of the state ceremonies. And seldom did the stoutest citizen forget to cross himself, or feel unchilled with a certain terror, whenever, passing by the place, he caught, suddenly fixed upon him, the stony gaze and ominous grin of that old monster from the cities of the Nile.

It was some minutes before the feelings of the assembly allowed Rienzi to be heard. But when, at length, the last shout closed with a simultaneous cry of “Long live Rienzi ! Deliverer and King of Rome !” he raised his hand impatiently, and the curiosity of the crowd procured a sudden silence.

“Deliverer of Rome, my countrymen !” said he. “Yes ! change not that title—I am too ambitious to be a King ! Preserve your obedience to your Pontiff—your allegiance to your Emperor—but be faithful to your own liberties. Ye have a right to your ancient constitution ; but that constitution needed not a king. Emulous of the name of Brutus, I am above the titles of a Tarquin. Romans, awake ! awake ! be inspired with a nobler love of liberty than that which, if it dethrones the

¹ The existent Capitol is very different from the building at the time of Rienzi ; and the reader must not suppose that the present staircase, designed by Michael Angelo, at the base of which are two marble lions, removed by Pius IV. from the Church of St. Stephen del Cacco, was the staircase of the Lion of Basalt, which bears so stern a connexion with the history of Rienzi. That mute witness of dark deeds is no more.

tyrant of to-day, would madly risk the danger of tyranny for to-morrow! Rome wants still a liberator—never an usurper!—Take away yon bauble!”

There was a pause; the crowd were deeply affected—but they uttered no shouts; they looked anxiously for a reply from their councillors, or popular leaders.

“Signor,” said Pandolfo di Guido, who was one of the Caporioni, “your answer is worthy of your fame. But, in order to enforce the law, Rome must endow you with a legal title—if not that of King, deign to accept that of Dictator or of Consul.”

“Long live the Consul Rienzi!” cried several voices.

Rienzi waved his hand for silence.

“Pandolfo di Guido! and you, honoured Councillors of Rome! such title is at once too august for my merits, and too inapplicable to my functions. I am one of the people—the people are my charge; the nobles can protect themselves. Dictator and Consul are the appellations of patricians. “No,” he continued after a short pause, “if you deem it necessary, for the preservation of order, that your fellow-citizen should be entrusted with a formal title and a recognised power, be it so: but let it be such as may attest the nature of our new institutions, the wisdom of the people, and the moderation of their leaders. Once, my countrymen, the people elected, for the protectors of their rights and the guardians of their freedom, certain officers responsible to the people,—chosen from the people,—provident *for* the people. Their power was great, but it was delegated: a dignity, but a trust. The name of these officers was that of Tribune. Such is the title that conceded, not by clamour alone, but in the full Parliament of the people, and accompanied *by*, such Parliament, ruling *with* such Parliament,—such is the title I will gratefully accept.”¹

The speech, the sentiments of Rienzi were rendered far more impressive by a manner of earnest and deep sincerity; and some

¹ Gibbon and Sismondi alike (neither of whom appears to have consulted with much attention the original documents preserved by Hocsemius), say nothing of the Representative Parliament, which it was almost Rienzi's first public act to institute or model. Six days from the memorable 19th of May, he addressed the people of Viterbo in a letter yet extant. He summons them to elect and send two syndics, or ambassadors, to the general Parliament.

of the Romans, despite their corruption, felt a momentary exultation in the forbearance of their chief. "Long live the Tribune of Rome!" was shouted, but less loud than the cry of "Live the King!" And the vulgar almost thought the revolution was incomplete, because the loftier title was not assumed. To a degenerate and embruted people, liberty seems too plain a thing, if unadorned by the pomp of the very despotism they would dethrone. Revenge is their desire, rather than Release; and the greater the new power they create, the greater seems their revenge against the old. Still all that was most respected, intelligent, and powerful amongst the assembly, were delighted at a temperance which they foresaw would free Rome from a thousand dangers, whether from the Emperor or the Pontiff. And their delight was yet increased, when Rienzi added, so soon as returning silence permitted—"And since we have been equal labourers in the same cause, whatever honours be awarded to me, should be extended also to the Vicar of the Pope, Raimond, Lord Bishop of Orvietto. Remember, that both Church and State are properly the rulers of the people, only because their benefactors.—Long live the first Vicar of a Pope that was ever also the Liberator of a State!"

Whether or not Rienzi was only actuated by patriotism in his moderation, certain it is, that his sagacity was at least equal to his virtue; and perhaps nothing could have cemented the revolution more strongly, than thus obtaining for a colleague the Vicar, and Representative of the Pontifical power: it borrowed, for the time, the sanction of the Pope himself—thus made to share the responsibility of the revolution, without monopolising the power of the State.

While the crowd hailed the proposition of Rienzi; while their shouts yet filled the air; while Raimond, somewhat taken by surprise, sought by signs and gestures to convey at once his gratitude and his humility, the Tribune-Elect, casting his eyes around, perceived many hitherto attracted by curiosity, and whom, from their rank and weight, it was desirable to secure in the first heat of the public enthusiasm. Accordingly, as soon as Raimond had uttered a short and pompous harangue,—in which his eager acceptance of the honour proposed him was ludicrously

contrasted by his embarrassed desire not to involve himself or the Pope in any untoward consequences that might ensue,—Rienzi motioned to two heralds that stood behind upon the platform, and one of these advancing, proclaimed—"That as it was desirable that all hitherto neuter should now profess themselves friends or foes, so they were invited to take at once the oath of obedience to the laws, and subscription to the *Buono Stato*."

So great was the popular fervour, and so much had it been refined and deepened in its tone by the addresses of Rienzi, that even the most indifferent had caught the contagion: and no man liked to be seen shrinking from the rest: so that the most neutral, knowing themselves the most marked, were the most entrapped into allegiance to the *Buono Stato*. The first who advanced to the platform and took the oath was the Signor di Raselli, the father of Nina. Others of the lesser nobility followed his example.

The presence of the Pope's Vicar induced the aristocratic; the fear of the people urged the selfish; the encouragement of shouts and gratulations excited the vain. The space between Adrian and Rienzi was made clear. The young noble suddenly felt the eyes of the Tribune were upon him; he felt that those eyes recognized and called upon him—he coloured—he breathed short. The noble forbearance of Rienzi had touched him to the heart;—the applause—the pageant—the enthusiasm of the scene, intoxicated—confused him.—He lifted his eyes and saw before him the sister of the Tribune—the lady of his love! His indecision—his pause—continued, when Raimond, observing him, and obedient to a whisper from Rienzi, artfully cried aloud—"Room for the Lord Adrian di Castello! a Colonna! a Colonna!" Retreat was cut off. Mechanically, and as if in a dream, Adrian ascended to the platform: and to complete the triumph of the Tribune, the sun's last ray beheld the flower of the Colonna—the best and bravest of the Barons of Rome—confessing his authority, and subscribing to his laws!

BOOK III.

THE FREEDOM WITHOUT LAW.

Ben furo avventurosi i cavalieri
Ch' erano a quella età, che nei valloni,
Nelle scure spelonche e boschi fieri,
Tane di serpi, d' orsi e di leoni,
Trovavan quel che nei palazzi altieri
Appena or trovar pon giudici buoni;
Donne che nella lor più fresca etade
Sien degne di aver titol di beltade.

—ARIOSTO, *Orl. Fur can. xiii. l.*

CHAPTER I.

THE RETURN OF WALTER DE MONTREAL TO HIS FORTRESS.

WHEN Walter de Montreal and his mercenaries quitted Corneto, they made the best of their way to Rome; arriving there, long before the Barons, they met with a similar reception at the gates, but Montreal prudently forbore all attack and menace, and contented himself with sending his trusty Rodolph into the city to seek Rienzi, and to crave permission to enter with his troop. Rodolf returned in a shorter time than was anticipated. "Well," said Montreal impatiently, "you have the order, I suppose. Shall we bid them open the gates?"

"Bid them open our graves," replied the Saxon, bluntly. "I trust my next heraldry will be to a more friendly court."

"How! what mean you?"

"Briefly this:—I found the new governor, or whatever his title, in the palace of the Capitol, surrounded by guards and

councillors, and in a suit of the finest armour I ever saw out of Milan."

"Pest on his armour! give us his answer."

"'Tell Walter de Montreal,' said he, then, if you will have it, 'that Rome is no longer a den of thieves; tell him, that if he enters, he must abide a trial——'"

"A trial!" cried Montreal, grinding his teeth.

"'For participation in the evil doings of Werner and his freebooters.'"

"Ha!"

"'Tell him, moreover, that Rome declares war against all robbers, whether in tent or tower, and that we order him in forty-eight hours to quit the territories of the Church.'"

"He thinks, then, not only to deceive, but to menace me? Well, proceed."

"That was all his reply to you; to me, however, he vouchsafed a caution still more obliging. 'Hark ye, friend,' said he; 'for every German bandit found in Rome after to-morrow, our welcome will be cord and gibbet! Begone.'"

"Enough! enough!" cried Montreal, colouring with rage and shame. "Rodolf, you have a skilful eye in these matters; how many Northmen would it take to give that same gibbet to the upstart?"

Rodolf scratched his huge head, and seemed a while lost in calculation; at length he said, "You, Captain, must be the best judge, when I tell you, that twenty thousand Romans are the least of his force; so I heard by the way; and this evening he is to accept the crown, and depose the Emperor."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Montreal; "is he so mad? then he will want not our aid to hang himself. My friends, let us wait the result. At present neither barons nor people seem likely to fill our coffers. Let us across the country to Terracina. Thank the saints," and Montreal (who was not without a strange kind of devotion,—indeed he deemed that virtue essential to chivalry) crossed himself piously, "the free companions are never long without quarters!"

"Hurrah for the Knight of St. John!" cried the mercenaries.

"And hurrah for fair Provence and bold Germany!" added the

Knight, as he waved his hand on high, struck spurs into his already wearied horse, and, breaking out into his favourite song,

“ His barb, and his sword,
And his lady the peerless,” &c.,

Montreal, with his troop, struck gallantly across the Campagna.

The Knight of St. John soon, however, fell into an absorbed and moody reverie; and his followers imitating the silence of their chief, in a few minutes the clatter of their arms and the jingle of their spurs alone disturbed the stillness of the wide and gloomy plains across which they made towards Terracina. Montreal was recalling with bitter resentment his conference with Rienzi; and, proud of his own sagacity and talent for scheming, he was humbled and vexed at the discovery that he had been duped by a wiler intriguer. His ambitious designs on Rome, too, were crossed, and even crushed for the moment by the very means to which he had looked for their execution. He had seen enough of the barons to feel assured that while Stephen Colonna lived, the head of the order, he was not likely to obtain that mastery in the state which, if leagued with a more ambitious or a less timid and less potent signor, might reward his aid in expelling Rienzi. Under all circumstances, he deemed it advisable to remain aloof. Should Rienzi grow strong, Montreal might make the advantageous terms he desired with the Barons; should Rienzi's power decay, his pride, necessarily humbled, might drive him to seek the assistance, and submit to the proposals, of Montreal. The ambition of the Provençal, though vast and daring, was not of a consistent and persevering nature. Action and enterprise were dearer to him, as yet, than the rewards which they proffered; and if baffled in one quarter, he turned himself, with the true spirit of the knight-errant, to any other field for his achievements. Louis, king of Hungary, stern, warlike, implacable, seeking vengeance for the murder of his brother, the ill-fated husband of Joanna (the beautiful and guilty Queen of Naples—the Mary Stuart of Italy), had already prepared himself to subject the garden of Campania to the Hungarian yoke. Already his bastard brother had entered Italy—already some of the Neapolitan states had declared in his favour—already promises had been held out by the northern

monarch to the scattered Companies—and already those fierce mercenaries gathered menacingly round the frontiers of that Eden of Italy, attracted, as vultures to the carcass, by the preparation of war and the hope of plunder. Such was the field to which the bold mind of Montreal now turned its thoughts; and his soldiers had joyfully conjectured his design when they had heard him fix Terracina as their bourne. Provident of every resource, and refining his audacious and unprincipled valour by a sagacity which promised, when years had more matured and sobered his restless chivalry, to rank him among the most dangerous enemies Italy had ever known, on the first sign of Louis's warlike intentions, Montreal had seized and fortified a strong castle on that delicious coast beyond Terracina, by which lies the celebrated pass once held by Fabius against Hannibal, and which Nature has so favoured for war as for peace, that a handful of armed men might stop the march of an army. The possession of such a fortress on the very frontiers of Naples, gave Montreal an importance of which he trusted to avail himself with the Hungarian king: and now, thwarted in his more grand and aspiring projects upon Rome, his sanguine, active, and elastic spirit congratulated itself upon the resource it had secured.

The band halted at nightfall on this side the Pontine Marshes, seizing without scruple some huts and sheds, from which they ejected the miserable tenants, and slaughtering with no greater ceremony the swine, cattle and poultry of a neighbouring farm. Shortly after sunrise they crossed those fatal swamps which had already been partially drained by Boniface VIII.; and Montreal, refreshed by sleep, reconciled to his late mortification by the advantages opened to him in the approaching war with Naples, and rejoicing as he approached a home which held one who alone divided his heart with ambition, he resumed all the gaiety which belonged to his Gallic birth and his reckless habits. And that deadly but consecrated road, where yet may be seen the labours of Augustus, in the canal which had witnessed the Voyage so humorously described by Horace, echoed with the loud laughter and frequent snatches of wild song by which the barbarian robbers enlivened their rapid march.

It was noon when the company entered upon that romantic pass I have before referred to—the ancient Lantulæ. High to the left rose steep and lofty rocks, then covered by the prodigal verdure, and the countless flowers, of the closing May; while to the right the sea, gentle as a lake, and blue as heaven, rippled musically at their feet. Montreal, who largely possessed the poetry of his land, which is so eminently allied with a love of nature, might at another time have enjoyed the beauty of the scene; but at that moment less external and more household images were busy within him.

Abruptly ascending where a winding path up the mountain offered a rough and painful road to their horses' feet, the band at length arrived before a strong fortress of grey stone, whose towers were concealed by the lofty foliage, until they emerged sullenly and suddenly from the laughing verdure. The sound of the bugle, the pennon of the knight, the rapid watchword, produced a loud shout of welcome from a score or two of grim soldiery on the walls; the portcullis was raised, and Montreal, throwing himself hastily from his panting steed, sprung across the threshold of a jutting porch, and traversed a huge hall, when a lady—young, fair, and richly dressed—met him with a step equally swift, and fell breathless and overjoyed into his arms.

"My Walter! my dear, dear Walter; welcome—ten thousand welcomes!"

"Adeline, my beautiful—my adored—I see thee again!"

Such were the greetings interchanged as Montreal pressed his lady to his heart, kissing away her tears, and lifting her face to his, while he gazed on its delicate bloom with all the wistful anxiety of affection after absence.

"Fairest," said he tenderly, "thou hast pined, thou hast lost roundness and colour since we parted. Come, come, thou art too gentle, or too foolish for a soldier's love."

"Ah, Walter!" replied Adeline, clinging to him, "now thou art returned, and I shall be well. Thou wilt not leave me again a long, long time."

"Sweet one, no;" and flinging his arm round her waist, the lovers—for alas! they were not wedded!—retired to the more private chambers of the castle.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE OF LOVE AND WAR—THE MESSENGER OF PEACE—THE JOUST.

GIRT with his soldiery, secure in his feudal hold, enchanted with the beauty of the earth, sky, and sea around, and passionately adoring his Adeline, Montreal for a while forgot all his more stirring projects and his ruder occupations. His nature was capable of great tenderness, as of great ferocity; and his heart smote him when he looked at the fair cheek of his lady, and saw that even his presence did not suffice to bring back the smile and the fresh hues of old. Often he cursed that fatal oath of his knightly order which forbade him to wed, though with one more than his equal; and remorse embittered his happiest hours. That gentle lady in that robber hold, severed from all she had been taught most to prize—mother, friends, and fair fame—only loved her seducer the more intensely; only the more concentrated upon one object all the womanly and tender feelings denied every other and less sinful vent. But she felt her shame, though she sought to conceal it, and a yet more gnawing grief than even that of shame contributed to prey upon her spirits and undermine her health. Yet, withal, in Montreal's presence she was happy, even in regret; and in her declining health, she had at least a consolation in the hope to die while his love was undiminished. Sometimes they made short excursions, for the disturbed state of the country forbade them to wander far from the castle, through the sunny woods, and along the glassy sea, which make the charm of that delicious scenery; and that mixture of the savage with the tender, the wild escort, the tent in some green glade in the woods at noon, the lute and voice of Adeline, with the fierce soldiers grouped and listening at the distance, might have well suited the verse of Ariosto, and harmonised singularly with that strange, disordered, yet chivalric time, in which the Classic South became the seat of the Northern Romance. Still, however, Montreal maintained his secret intercourse with the Hungarian king, and, plunged in new projects,

willingly forsook for the present all his designs on Rome. Yet deemed he that his more august ambition was only delayed, and, bright in the more distant prospects of his adventurous career, rose the Capitol of Rome and shone the sceptre of the Cæsars.

One day, as Montreal, with a small troop in attendance, passed on horseback near the walls of Terracina, the gates were suddenly thrown open, and a numerous throng issued forth, preceded by a singular figure, whose steps they followed bare-headed and with loud blessings; a train of monks closed the procession, chanting a hymn, of which the concluding words were as follows:—

Beauteous on the mountains—lo,
 The feet of him glad tidings gladly bringing;
 The flowers along his pathway grow,
 And voices, heard aloft, to angel harps are singing;
 And strife and slaughter cease
 Before thy blessed way, Young Messenger of Peace!
 O'er the mount, and through the moor,
 Glide thy holy steps secure.
 Day and night no fear thou knowest,
 Lonely—but with God thou goest,
 Where the heathen rage the fiercest,
 Through the armed throng thou piercest.
 For thy coat of mail, bedight
 In thy spotless robe of white.
 For the sinful sword—thy hand
 Bearing bright the silver wand:
 Through the camp and through the court,
 Through the bandit's gloomy fort,
 On the mission of the dove,
 Speeds the minister of love;
 By a word the wildest taming,
 And the world to Christ reclaiming:
 While, as once the waters trod
 By the footsteps of thy God,
 War, and wrath, and rapine cease,
 Hush'd round thy charmed path, O Messenger of Peace!

The stranger to whom these honours were paid was a young, unbearded man, clothed in white wrought with silver; he was unarmed and barefooted: in his hand he held a tall silver wand. Montreal and his party halted in astonishment and wonder, and the knight, spurring his horse towards the crowd, confronted the stranger.

“How, friend,” quoth the Provençal, “is thine a new order of pilgrims, or what especial holiness has won thee this homage?”

"Back, back," cried some of the bolder of the crowd ; "let not the robber dare arrest the Messenger of Peace."

Montreal waved his hand disdainfully.

"I speak not to you, good sirs, and the worthy friars in your rear know full well that I never injured herald or palmer."

The monks, ceasing from their hymn, advanced hastily to the spot ; and indeed the devotion of Montreal had ever induced him to purchase the goodwill of whatever monastery neighboured his wandering home.

"My son," said the eldest of the brethren, "this is a strange spectacle, and a sacred : and when thou learnest all, thou wilt rather give the messenger a passport of safety from the unthinking courage of thy friends than intercept his path of peace."

"Ye puzzle still more my simple brain," said Montreal, impatiently, "let the youth speak for himself ; I perceive that on his mantle are the arms of Rome blended with other quarterings, which are a mystery to me,—though sufficiently versed in heraldic art as befits a noble and a knight."

"Signor," said the youth gravely, "know in me the messenger of Cola di Rienzi, Tribune of Rome, charged with letters to many a baron and prince in the ways between Rome and Naples. The arms wrought upon my mantle are those of the Pontiff, the City, and the Tribune."

"Umph ; thou must have bold nerves to traverse the Campagna with no other weapon than that stick of silver !"

"Thou art mistaken, Sir Knight," replied the youth, boldly, "and judgest of the present by the past ; know that not a single robber now lurks within the Campagna, the arms of the Tribune have rendered every road around the city as secure as the broadest street of the city itself."

"Thou tellest me wonders."

"Through the forest—and in the fortress,—through the wildest solitudes,—through the most populous towns,—have my comrades borne this silver wand unmolested and unscathed. Wherever we pass along, thousands hail us, and tears of joy bless the messengers of him who hath expelled the brigand from his hold, the tyrant from his castle, and insured the gains of the merchant and the hut of the peasant."

"*Pardieu*," said Montreal, with a stern smile, "I ought to be thankful for the preference shown to me; I have not yet received the commands, nor felt the vengeance, of the Tribune; yet, methinks, my humble castle lies just within the patrimony of St. Peter."

"Pardon me, Signor Cavalier," said the youth; "but do I address the renowned Knight of St. John, warrior of the Cross, yet leader of banditti?"

"Boy, you are bold; I am Walter de Montreal."

"I am bound, then, Sir Knight, to your castle."

"Take care how thou reach it before me, or thou standest a fair chance of a quick exit. How now, my friends?" seeing that the crowd at these words gathered closer round the messenger. "Think ye that I, who have my mate in kings, would find a victim in an unarmed boy? Fie! give way—give way. Young man, follow me homeward; you are safe in my castle as in your mother's arms." So saying, Montreal, with great dignity and deliberate gravity, rode slowly towards his castle, his soldiers, wondering, at a little distance, and the white-robed messenger following with the crowd, who refused to depart; so great was their enthusiasm, that they even ascended to the gates of the dreaded castle, and insisted on waiting without until the return of the youth assured them of his safety.

Montreal, who, however lawless elsewhere, strictly preserved the rights of the meanest boor in his immediate neighbourhood, and rather affected popularity with the poor, bade the crowd enter the courtyard, ordered his servitors to provide them with wine and refreshment, regaled the good monks in his great hall, and then led the way to a small room, where he received the messenger.

"This," said the youth, "will best explain my mission," as he placed a letter before Montreal.

The Knight cut the silk with his dagger, and read the epistle with great composure.

"Your Tribune," said he, when he had finished it, "has learned the laconic style of power very soon. He orders me to render this castle, and vacate the Papal territory within ten days. He is obliging; I must have breathing time to consider

the proposal; be seated, I pray you, young sir. Forgive me, but I should have imagined that your lord had enough upon his hands with his Roman barons, to make him a little more indulgent to us foreign visitors. Stephen Colonna——”

“Is returned to Rome, and has taken the oath of allegiance; the Savelli, the Orsini, the Frangipani, have all subscribed their submission to the *Buono Stato*.”

“How!” cried Montreal, in great surprise.

“Not only have they returned, but they have submitted to the dispersion of all their mercenaries, and the dismantling of all their fortifications. The iron of the Orsini palace now barricades the Capitol, and the stonework of the Colonna and the Savelli has added new battlements to the gates of the Lateran and St. Laurence.”

“Wonderful man!” said Montreal, with reluctant admiration. “By what means was this effected?”

“A stern command and a strong force to back it. At the first sound of the great bell, twenty thousand Romans rise in arms. What to such an army are the brigands of an Orsini or a Colonna?—Sir Knight, your valour and renown make even Rome admire you; and I, a Roman, bid you beware.”

“Well, I thank thee—thy news, friend, robs me of breath. So the Barons submit, then?”

“Yes: on the first day, one of the Colonna, the Lord Adrian, took the oath; within a week, Stephen, assured of safe conduct, left Palestrina, the Savelli in his train; the Orsini followed—even Martino di Porto has silently succumbed.”

“The Tribune—but is that his dignity? methought he was to be king——”

“He was offered, and he refused the title. His present rank, which arrogates no patrician honours, went far to conciliate the nobles.”

“A wise knave!—I beg pardon, a sagacious prince!—Well, then, the Tribune lords it mightily, I suppose, over the great Roman names?”

“Pardon me—he enforces impartial justice from peasant or patrician; but he preserves to the nobles all their just privileges and legal rank.”

"Ha!—and the vain puppets, so they keep the semblance, scarce miss the substance—I understand. But this shows genius—the Tribune is unwed, I think. Does he look among the Colonna for a wife?"

"Sir Knight, the Tribune is already married; within three days after his ascension to power, he won and bore home the daughter of the Baron di Raselli."

"Raselli! no great name; he might have done better."

"But it is said," resumed the youth, smiling, "that the Tribune will shortly be allied to the Colonna, through his fair sister the Signora Irene. The Baron di Castello woos her."

"What, Adrian Colonna! Enough! you have convinced me that a man who contents the people and awes or conciliates the nobles is born for empire. My answer to this letter I will send myself. For your news, Sir Messenger, accept this jewel," and the knight took from his finger a gem of some price. "Nay, shrink not, it was as freely given to me as it is now to thee."

The youth, who had been agreeably surprised, and impressed, by the manner of the renowned freebooter, and who was not a little astonished himself with the ease and familiarity with which he had been relating to Fra Moreale, in his own fortress, the news of Rome, bowed low as he accepted the gift.

The astute Provençal, who saw the evident impression he had made, perceived also that it might be of advantage in delaying the measures he might deem it expedient to adopt. "Assure the Tribune," said he, on dismissing the messenger, "shouldst thou return ere my letter arrive, that I admire his genius, hail his power, and will not fail to consider as favourably as I may of his demand."

"Better," said the messenger, warmly (he was of good blood, and gentle bearing)—"better ten tyrants for our enemy than one Montreal."

"An enemy! believe me, sir, I seek no enmity with princes who know how to govern, or a people that has the wisdom at once to rule and to obey."

The whole of that day, however, Montreal remained thoughtful and uneasy; he despatched trusty messengers to the Governor of Aquila (who was then in correspondence with Louis of

Hungary), to Naples, and to Rome :—the last charged with a letter to the Tribune, which, without absolutely compromising himself, affected submission, and demanded only a longer leisure for the preparations of departure. But, at the same time, fresh fortifications were added to the castle, ample provisions were laid in, and, night and day, spies and scouts were stationed along the pass, and in the town of Terracina. Montreal was precisely the chief who prepared most for war when most he pretended peace.

One morning, the fifth from the appearance of the Roman messenger, Montreal, after narrowly surveying his outworks and his stores, and feeling satisfied that he could hold out at least a month's siege, repaired, with a gayer countenance than he had lately worn, to the chamber of Adeline.

The lady was seated by the casement of the tower, from which might be seen the glorious landscape of woods, and vales, and orange groves—a strange garden for such a palace! As she leant her face upon her hand, with her profile slightly turned to Montreal, there was something ineffably graceful in the bend of her neck,—the small head so expressive of gentle blood,—with the locks parted in front in that simple fashion which modern times have so happily revived. But the expression of the half-averted face, the abstracted intentness of the gaze, and the profound stillness of the attitude, were so sad and mournful, that Montreal's purposed greeting of gallantry and gladness died upon his lips. He approached in silence, and laid his hand upon her shoulder.

Adeline turned, and taking the hand in hers, pressed it to her heart, and smiled away all her sadness. "Dearest," said Montreal, "couldst thou know how much any shadow of grief on thy bright face darkens my heart, thou wouldst never grieve. But no wonder that in these rude walls—no female of equal rank near thee, and such mirth as Montreal can summon to his halls, grating to thy ear—no wonder that thou repentest thee of thy choice."

"Ah, no—no, Walter, I never repent. I did but think of our child as you entered. Alas! he was our only child! How fair he was, Walter; how he resembled thee!"

"Nay, he had thine eyes and brow," replied the Knight, with a faltering voice, and turning away his head.

"Walter," resumed the lady, sighing, "do you remember?—this is his birthday. He is ten years old to-day. We have loved each other eleven years, and thou hast not tired yet of thy poor Adeline."

"As well might the saints weary of Paradise," replied Montreal, with an enamoured tenderness, which changed into softness the whole character of his heroic countenance.

"Could I think so, I should indeed be blest!" answered Adeline. "But a little while longer, and the few charms I yet possess must fade; and what other claim have I on thee?"

"All claim;—the memory of thy first blushes—thy first kiss—of thy devoted sacrifices—of thy patient wanderings—of thy uncomplaining love! Ah, Adeline, we are of Provence, not of Italy; and when did Knight of Provence avoid his foe, or forsake his love? But enough, dearest, of home and melancholy for to-day. I come to bid thee forth. I have sent on the servitors to pitch our tent beside the sea,—we will enjoy the orange blossoms while we may. Ere another week pass over us, we may have sterner pastime and closer confines."

"How, dearest Walter! thou dost not apprehend danger?"

"Thou speakest, lady-bird," said Montreal, laughing, "as if danger were novelty; methinks by this time, thou shouldst know it as the atmosphere we breathe."

"Ah, Walter, is this to last for ever? Thou art now rich and renowned; canst thou not abandon this career of strife?"

"Now, out on thee, Adeline. What are riches and renown but the means to power? And for strife, the shield of warriors was my cradle—pray the saints it be my bier! These wild and wizard extremes of life—from the bower to the tent—from the cavern to the palace—to-day a wandering exile, to-morrow the equal of kings—make the true element of the chivalry of my Norman sires. Normandy taught me war, and sweet Provence love. Kiss me, dear Adeline; and now let thy handmaids attire thee. Forget not thy lute, sweet one. We will rouse the echoes with the songs of Provence."

The ductile temper of Adeline yielded easily to the gaiety of

her lord; and the party soon sallied from the castle towards the spot in which Montreal had designed their resting-place during the heats of day. But already prepared for all surprise, the castle was left strictly guarded, and besides the domestic servitors of the castle, a detachment of ten soldiers, completely armed, accompanied the lovers. Montreal himself wore his corselet, and his squires followed with his helmet and lance. Beyond the narrow defile at the base of the castle, the road at that day opened into a broad patch of verdure, circled on all sides, save that open to the sea, by wood, interspersed with myrtle and orange, and a wilderness of odorous shrubs. In this space, and sheltered by the broad-spreading and classic *fagus* (so improperly translated into the English *beech*), a gay pavilion was prepared, which commanded the view of the sparkling sea;—shaded from the sun, but open to the gentle breeze. This was poor Adeline's favourite recreation, if recreation it might be called. She rejoiced to escape from the gloomy walls of her castellated prison, and to enjoy the sunshine and the sweets of that voluptuous climate without the fatigue which of late all exercise occasioned her. It was a gallantry on the part of Montreal, who foresaw how short an interval might elapse before the troops of Rienzi besieged his walls; and who was himself no less at home in the bower than in the field.

As they reclined within the pavilion—the lover and his lady,—of the attendants without, some lounged idly on the beach; some prepared the awning of a pleasure-boat against the decline of the sun; some, in a ruder tent, out of sight in the wood, arranged the mid-day repast; while the strings of the lute, touched by Montreal himself with a careless skill, gave their music to the dreamy stillness of the noon.

While thus employed, one of Montreal's scouts arrived breathless and heated at the tent.

"Captain," said he, "a company of thirty lances completely armed, with a long retinue of squires and pages, have just quitted Terracina. Their banners bear the two-fold insignia of Rome and the Colonna."

"Ho!" said Montreal, gaily, "such a troop is a welcome addition to our company; send our squire hither."

The squire appeared.

"Hie thee on thy steed towards the procession thou wilt meet with in the pass (nay, sweet lady mine, no forbiddal)! seek the chief, and say that the good Knight Walter de Montreal sends him greeting, and prays him, in passing our proper territory, to rest a while with us a welcome guest; and—stay,—add, that, if to while an hour or so in gentle pastime be acceptable to him, Walter de Montreal would rejoice to break a lance with him, or any knight in his train, in honour of our respective ladies. Hie thee quick!"

"Walter, Walter," began Adeline, who had that keen and delicate sensitiveness to her situation, which her reckless lord often wantonly forgot; "Walter, dear Walter, canst thou think it honour to——"

"Hush thee, sweet *Fleur de lis*! Thou hast not seen pastime this many a day; I long to convince thee that thou art still the fairest lady in Italy—ay, and of Christendom. But these Italians are craven knights, and thou needst not fear that my proffer will be accepted. But in truth, lady mine, I rejoice for graver objects, that chance throws a Roman noble, perhaps a Colonna, in my way;—women understand not these matters; and aught concerning Rome touches us home at this moment."

With that the Knight frowned, as was his wont in thought, and Adeline ventured to say no more, but retired to the interior division of the pavilion.

Meanwhile the squire approached the procession that had now reached the middle of the pass. And a stately and gallant company it was:—if the complete harness of the soldiery seemed to attest a warlike purpose, it was contradicted on the other hand by a numerous train of unarmed squires and pages gorgeously attired, while the splendid blazon of two heralds preceding the standard-bearers, proclaimed their object as peaceful, and their path as sacred. It required but a glance at the company to tell the leader. Arrayed in a breastplate of steel, wrought profusely with gold arabesques, over which was a mantle of dark-green velvet, bordered with pearls, while above his long dark locks waved a black ostrich plume in a high Macedonian cap, such as, I believe, is now worn by the Grand Master of the Order

of St. Constantine, rode in the front of the party a young cavalier, distinguished from his immediate comrades, partly by his graceful presence and partly by his splendid dress.

The squire approached respectfully, and dismounting, delivered himself of his charge.

The young cavalier smiled, as he answered, "Bear back to Sir Walter de Montreal the greeting of Adrian Colonna, Baron di Castello, and say, the solemn object of my present journey will scarce permit me to encounter the formidable lance of so celebrated a knight; and I regret this the more, inasmuch as I may not yield to any dame the palm of my liege lady's beauty. I must live in hope of a happier occasion. For the rest, I will cheerfully abide for some few hours the guest of so courteous a host."

The squire bowed low. "My master," said he, hesitatingly, "will grieve much to miss so noble an opponent. But my message refers to all this knightly and gallant train; and if the Lord Adrian di Castello deems himself forbidden the joust by the object of his present journey, surely one of his comrades will be his proxy with my master."

Out and quickly spoke a young noble by the side of Adrian, Riccardo Annibaldi, who afterwards did good service both to the Tribune and to Rome, and whose valour brought him, in later life, to an untimely end.

"By the Lord Adrian's permission," cried he, "I will break a lance with——"

"Hush! Annibaldi," interrupted Adrian. "And you, Sir Squire, know, that Adrian di Castello permits no proxy in arms. Advise the Knight of St. John that we accept his hospitality, and if, after some converse on graver matters, he should still desire so light an entertainment, I will forget that I am the ambassador to Naples, and remember only that I am a Knight of the Empire. You have your answer."

The squire with much ceremony made his obeisance, remounted his steed, and returned in a half-gallop to his master.

"Forgive me, dear Annibaldi," said Adrian, "that I balked your valour; and believe me that I never more longed to break a lance against any man than I do against this boasting French-

man. But bethink you, that though to us, brought up in the dainty laws of chivalry, Walter de Montreal is the famous Knight of Provence, to the Tribune of Rome, whose grave mission we now fulfil, he is but the mercenary captain of a Free Company. Grievously in his eyes should we sully our dignity by so wanton and irrelevant a holiday conflict with a declared and professional brigand.

"For all that," said Annibaldi, "the brigand ought not to boast that a Roman knight shunned a Provençal lance."

"Cease, I pray thee!" said Adrian, impatiently. In fact, the young Coronna, already chafed bitterly against his discreet and dignified rejection of Montreal's proffer, and recollecting with much pique the disparaging manner in which the Provençal had spoken of the Roman chivalry, as well as a certain tone of superiority, which in all warlike matters Montreal had assumed over him,—he now felt his cheek burn, and his lip quiver. Highly skilled in the martial accomplishments of his time, he had a natural and excusable desire to prove that he was at least no unworthy antagonist even of the best lance in Italy: and, added to this, the gallantry of the age made him feel it a sort of treason to his mistress to forego any means of asserting her perfections.

It was, therefore, with considerable irritation that Adrian, as the pavilion of Montreal became visible, perceived the squire returning to him. And the reader will judge how much this was increased when the latter, once more dismounting, accosted him thus:

"My master, the Knight of St. John, on hearing the courteous answer of the Lord Adrian di Castello, bids me say, that lest the graver converse the Lord Adrian refers to should mar gentle and friendly sport, he ventures respectfully to suggest, that the tilt should preface the converse. The sod before the tent is so soft and smooth, that even a fall could be attended with *no danger* to knight or steed."

"By our Lady!" cried Adrian and Annibaldi in a breath, "but thy last words are discourteous; and" (proceeded Adrian, recovering himself) "since thy master will have it so, let him look to his horse's girths. I will not gainsay his fancy."

Montreal, who had thus insisted upon the exhibition, partly, it may be, from the gay and ruffling bravado, common still amongst his brave countrymen; partly because he was curious of exhibiting before those who might soon be his open foes his singular and unrivalled address in arms, was yet more moved to it on learning the name of the leader of the Roman Company; for his vain and haughty spirit, however it had disguised resentment at the time, had by no means forgiven certain warm expressions of Adrian in the palace of Stephen Colonna, and in the unfortunate journey to Corneto. While Adrian, halting at the entrance of the defile, aided by his squires, indignantly, but carefully, indued the rest of his armour, and saw, himself, to the girths, stirrup-leathers, and various buckles in the caparison of his noble charger, Montreal in great glee kissed his lady, who, though too soft to be angry, was deeply vexed (and yet her vexation half forgotten in fear for his safety), snatched up her scarf of blue, which he threw over his breastplate, and completed his array with the indifference of a man certain of victory. He was destined, however, to one disadvantage, and that the greatest; his armour and lance had been brought from the castle—not his war-horse. His palfrey was too slight to bear the great weight of his armour, nor amongst his troop was there one horse that for power and bone could match with Adrian's. He chose, however, the strongest that was at hand, and a loud shout from his wild followers testified their admiration when he sprung unaided from the ground into the saddle—a rare and difficult feat of agility in a man completely arrayed in the ponderous armour which issued at that day from the forges of Milan, and was worn far more weighty in Italy than any other part of Europe. While both companies grouped slowly, and mingled in a kind of circle round the green turf, and the Roman heralds, with bustling importance, attempted to marshal the spectators into order, Montreal rode his charger round the sward, forcing it into various caracoles, and exhibiting, with the vanity that belonged to him, his exquisite and practised horsemanship.

At length, Adrian, his visor down, rode slowly into the green space, amidst the cheers of his party. The two Knights, at

either end, gravely fronted each other; they made the courtesies with their lances which, in friendly and sportive encounters, were customary; and, as they thus paused for the signal of encounter, the Italians trembled for the honour of their chief: Montreal's stately height and girth of chest forming a strong contrast, even in armour, to the form of his opponent, which was rather under the middle standard, and though firmly knit, slightly and slenderly built. But to that perfection was skill in arms brought in those times, that great strength and size were far from being either the absolute requisites, or even the usual attributes, of the more celebrated knights; in fact, so much was effected by the power and the management of the steed, that a light weight in the rider was often rather to his advantage than his prejudice: and, even at a later period, the most accomplished victors in the tourney, the French Bayard and the English Sydney, were far from remarkable either for bulk or stature.

Whatever the superiority of Montreal in physical power, was, in much, counterbalanced by the inferiority of his horse, which, though a thick-built and strong Calabrian, had neither the blood, bone, nor practised discipline of the northern charger of the Roman. The shining coat of the latter, coal black, was set off by a scarlet cloth wrought in gold; the neck and shoulders were clad in scales of mail; and from the forehead projected a long point, like the horn of an unicorn, while on its crest waved a tall plume of scarlet and white feathers. As the mission of Adrian to Naples was that of pomp and ceremony to a court of great splendour, so his array and retinue were befitting the occasion and the passion for show that belonged to the time: and the very bridle of his horse, which was three inches broad, was decorated with gold, and even jewels. The Knight himself was clad in mail, which had tested the finest art of the celebrated Ludovico of Milan; and, altogether, his appearance was unusually gallant and splendid, and seemed still more so beside the plain but brightly polished and artfully flexile armour of Montreal (adorned only with his lady's scarf), and the common and rude mail of his charger. This contrast, however, was not welcome to the Provençal, whose vanity was especially indulged in warlike equipments; and who, had he foreseen

the "pastime" that awaited him, would have outshone even the Colonna.

The trumpeters of either party gave a short blast—the Knights remained erect as statues of iron; a second, and each slightly bent over his saddle-bow; a third, and with spears couched, slackened reins, and at full speed, on they rushed, and fiercely they met midway. With the reckless arrogance which belonged to him, Montreal had imagined, that at the first touch of his lance Adrian would have been unhorsed; but to his great surprise the young Roman remained firm, and amidst the shouts of his party, passed on to the other end of the lists. Montreal himself was rudely shaken, but lost neither seat nor stirrup.

"This can be no carpet knight," muttered Montreal between his teeth, as, this time, he summoned all his skill for a second encounter; while Adrian, aware of the great superiority of his charger, resolved to bring it to bear against his opponent. Accordingly, when the knights again rushed forward, Adrian, covering himself well with his buckler, directed his care less against the combatant, whom he felt no lance wielded by mortal hand was likely to dislodge, than against the less noble animal he bestrode. The shock of Montreal's charge was like an avalanche—his lance shattered into a thousand pieces. Adrian lost both stirrups, and but for the strong iron bows which guarded the saddle in front and rear, would have been fairly unhorsed; as it was, he was almost doubled back by the encounter, and his ears rung and his eyes reeled, so that for a moment or two he almost lost all consciousness. But his steed had well repaid its nurture and discipline. Just as the combatants closed, the animal, rearing on high, pressed forward with its mighty crest against its opponent with a force so irresistible as to drive back Montreal's horse several paces: while Adrian's lance, poised with exquisite skill, striking against the Provençal's helmet, somewhat rudely diverted the Knight's attention for the moment from his rein. Montreal, drawing the curb too tightly in the suddenness of his recovery, the horse reared on end; and, receiving at that instant, full upon his breastplate, the sharp horn and mailed crest of Adrian's charger—fell back over its rider upon the sward. Montreal

disencumbered himself in great rage and shame, as a faint cry from his pavilion reached his ear, and redoubled his mortification. He rose with a lightness which astonished the beholders; for so heavy was the armour worn at that day, that few knights once stretched upon the ground could rise without assistance; and drawing his sword, cried out fiercely—"On foot, on foot!—the fall was not mine, but this accursed beast's, that I must needs for my sins raise to the rank of a charger. Come on——"

"Nay, Sir Knight," said Adrian, drawing off his gauntlets and unbuckling his helmet, which he threw on the ground, "I come to thee a guest and a friend; but to fight on foot is the encounter of mortal foes. Did I accept thy offer, my defeat would but stain thy knighthood."

Montreal, whose passion had beguiled him for the moment, sullenly acquiesced in this reasoning. Adrian hastened to soothe his antagonist. "For the rest," said he, "I cannot pretend to the prize. Your lance lost me my stirrups—mine left you unshaken. You say right! The defeat, if any, was that of your steed."

"We may meet again, when I am more equally horsed," said Montreal, still chafing.

"Now, our Lady forbid!" exclaimed Adrian, with so devout an earnestness that the bystanders could not refrain from laughing; and even Montreal, grimly and half-reluctantly, joined in the merriment. The courtesy of his foe, however, conciliated and touched the more frank and soldierly qualities of his nature, and composing himself, he replied:—

"Signor di Castello, I rest your debtor for a courtesy that I have but little imitated. Howbeit, if thou wouldst bind me to thee for ever, thou wilt suffer me to send for my own charger, and afford me a chance to retrieve mine honour. With that steed, or with one equal to thine, which seems to me of the English breed, I will gage all I possess, lands, castle, and gold, sword and spurs, to maintain this pass, one by one, against all thy train."

Fortunately, perhaps, for Adrian, ere he could reply, Riccardo Annibaldi cried, with great warmth, "Sir Knight, I have with me two steeds well practised in the tourney; take thy choice,

and accept in me a champion of the Roman against the French chivalry ;—there is my gage.”

“Signor,” replied Montreal, with ill-suppressed delight, “thy proffer shows so gallant and free a spirit, that it were foul sin in me to balk it. I accept thy gage, and whichever of thy steeds thou rejectest, in God’s name bring it hither, and let us waste no words before action.”

Adrian, who felt that hitherto the Romans had been more favoured by fortune than merit, vainly endeavoured to prevent this second hazard. But Annibaldi was greatly chafed, and his high rank rendered it impolitic in Adrian to offend him by peremptory prohibition ; the Colonna reluctantly, therefore, yielded his assent to the engagement. Annibaldi’s steeds were led to the spot, the one a noble roan, the other a bay, of somewhat less breeding and bone, but still of great strength and price. Montreal finding the choice pressed upon him, gallantly selected the latter and less excellent.

Annibaldi was soon arrayed for the encounter, and Adrian gave the word to the trumpeters. The Roman was of a stature almost equal to that of Montreal, and though some years younger, seemed, in his armour, nearly of the same thews and girth, so that the present antagonists appeared at the first glance more evenly matched than the last. But this time Montreal, well horsed, inspired to the utmost by shame and pride, felt himself a match for an army ; and he met the young Baron with such prowess, that while the very plume on his casque seemed scarcely stirred, the Italian was thrown several paces from his steed, and it was not till some moments after his visor was removed by his squires that he recovered his senses. This event restored Montreal to all his natural gaiety of humour, and effectually raised the spirits of his followers, who had felt much humbled by the previous encounter.

He himself assisted Annibaldi to rise with great courtesy, and a profusion of compliments, which the proud Roman took in stern silence, and then led the way to the pavilion, loudly ordering the banquet to be spread. Annibaldi, however, loitered behind, and Adrian, who penetrated his thoughts, and who saw that over their cups a quarrel between the Provençal and his

friend was likely to ensue, drawing him aside, said :— ‘ Methinks, dear Annibaldi, it would be better if you, with the chief of our following, were to proceed onward to Fondi, where I will join you at sunset. My squires and some eight lances will suffice for my safeguard here ; and, to say truth, I desire a few private words with our strange host, in the hope that he may be peaceably induced to withdraw from hence without the help of our Roman troops, who have enough elsewhere to feed their valour.”

Annibaldi pressed his companion’s hand : “ I understand thee,” he replied with a slight blush, “ and, indeed, I could but ill brook the complacent triumph of the barbarian. I accept thy offer.”

CHAPTER III.

THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE ROMAN AND THE PROVENÇAL—ADELINE’S HISTORY—THE MOON-LIT SEA—THE LUTE AND THE SONG.

AS soon as Annibaldi, with the greater part of the retinue, was gone, Adrian, divesting himself of his heavy greaves, entered alone the pavilion of the Knight of St. John. Montreal had already doffed all his armour, save the breastplate, and he now stepped forward to welcome his guest with the winning and easy grace which better suited his birth than his profession. He received Adrian’s excuses for the absence of Annibaldi and the other knights of his train with a smile which seemed to prove how readily he divined the cause, and conducted him to the other and more private division of the pavilion in which the repast (rendered acceptable by the late exercise of guest and host) was prepared ; and here Adrian for the first time discovered Adeline. Long inurement to the various and roving life of her lover, joined to a certain pride which she derived from conscious, though forfeited, rank, gave to the outward manner of that beautiful lady an ease and freedom which often concealed, even from Montreal, her sensitiveness to her unhappy situation. At times, indeed, when alone with Montreal, whom she loved with all the devotion of romance,

she was sensible only to the charm of a presence which consoled her for all things; but in his frequent absence, or on the admission of any stranger, the illusion vanished—the reality returned. Poor lady! Nature had not formed, education had not reared, habit had not reconciled, her to the breath of shame!

The young Colonna was much struck by her beauty, and more by her gentle and high-born grace. Like her lord she appeared younger than she was; time seemed to spare a bloom which an experienced eye might have told was destined to an early grave; and there was something almost girlish in the lightness of her form—the braided luxuriance of her rich auburn hair, and the colour that went and came, not only with every movement, but almost with every word. The contrast between her and Montreal became them both—it was the contrast of devoted reliance and protecting strength: each looked fairer in the presence of the other: and as Adrian sate down to the well-laden board, he thought he had never seen a pair more formed for the poetic legends of their native Troubadours.

Montreal conversed gaily upon a thousand matters—pressed the wine flasks—and selected for his guest the most delicate portions of the delicious *spicola* of the neighbouring sea, and the rich flesh of the wild boar of the Pontine Marshes.

“Tell me,” said Montreal, as their hunger was now appeased—“tell me, noble Adrian, how fares your kinsman, Signor Stephen? A brave old man for his years.”

“He bears him as the youngest of us,” answered Adrian.

“Late events must have shocked him a little,” said Montreal, with an arch smile. “Ah, you look grave—yet commend my foresight;—I was the first who prophesied to thy kinsman the rise of Cola di Rienzi; he seems a great man—never more great than in conciliating the Colonna and the Orsini.”

“The Tribune,” returned Adrian, evasively, “is certainly a man of extraordinary genius. And now, seeing him command, my only wonder is how he ever brooked to obey—majesty seems a very part of him.”

“Men who win power, easily put on its harness, dignity,” answered Montreal; “and if I hear aright—(pledge me to your

lady's health)—the Tribune, if not himself nobly born, will soon be nobly connected."

"He is already married to a Raselli, an old Roman house," replied Adrian.

"You evade my pursuit,—*Le doux soupir ! le doux soupir !* as the old Cabestan has it"—said Montreal, laughing. "Well, you have pledged me one cup to your lady, pledge another to the fair Irene, the Tribune's sister—always provided they two are not one.—You smile and shake your head."

"I do not disguise from you, Sir Knight," answered Adrian, "that when my present embassy is over, I trust the alliance between the Tribune and a Colonna will go far towards the benefit of both."

"I have heard rightly, then," said Montreal, in a grave and thoughtful tone. "Rienzi's power must indeed be great."

"Of that my mission is a proof. Are you aware, Signor de Montreal, that Louis, King of Hungary——"

"How ! what of him ?"

"Has referred the decision of the feud between himself and Johanna of Naples, respecting the death of her royal spouse, his brother, to the fiat of the Tribune ? This is the first time, methinks, since the death of Constantine, that so great a confidence and so high a charge were ever intrusted to a Roman !"

"By all the saints in the calendar," cried Montreal, crossing himself, "this news is indeed amazing ! The fierce Louis of Hungary waive the right of the sword, and choose other umpire than the field of battle !"

"And this," continued Adrian, in a significant tone, "this it was which induced me to obey your courteous summons. I know, brave Montreal, that you hold intercourse with Louis. Louis has given to the Tribune the best pledge of his amity and alliance ; will you do wisely if you——"

"Wage war with the Hungarian's ally ?" interrupted Montreal. "This you were about to add ; the same thought crossed myself. My Lord, pardon me—Italians sometimes invent what they wish. On the honour of a Knight of the Empire, these tidings are the naked truth ?"

"By my honour, and on the Cross," answered Adrian, drawing

himself up ; "and in proof thereof, I am now bound to Naples to settle with the Queen the preliminaries of the appointed trial."

"Two crowned heads before the tribunal of a plebeian, and one a defendant against the charge of murder!" muttered Montreal ; "the news might well amaze me!"

He remained musing and silent a little while, till, looking up, he caught Adeline's tender gaze fixed upon him with that deep solicitude with which she watched the outward effect of schemes and projects she was too soft to desire to know, and too innocent to share.

"Lady mine," said the Provençal, fondly, "how sayest thou? must we abandon our mountain castle, and these wild woodland scenes, for the dull walls of a city? I fear me so.—The Lady Adeline," he continued, turning to Adrian, "is of a singular bias; she hates the gay crowds of streets and thoroughfares, and esteems no palace like the solitary outlaw's hold. Yet, methinks, she might outshine all the faces of Italy,—thy mistress, Lord Adrian, of course, excepted."

"It is an exception which only a lover, and that too a betrothed lover, would dare to make," replied Adrian, gallantly.

"Nay," said Adeline, in a voice singularly sweet and clear, "nay, I know well at what price to value my lord's flattery, and Signor di Castello's courtesy. But you are bound, Sir Knight, to a court, that, if fame speak true, boasts in its Queen the very miracle and mould of beauty."

"It is some years since I saw the Queen of Naples," answered Adrian ; "and I little dreamed then, when I gazed upon that angel face, that I should live to hear her accused of the foulest murder that ever stained even Italian royalty."

"And, as if resolved to prove her guilt," said Montreal, "ere long be sure she will marry the very man who did the deed. Of this I have certain proof."

Thus conversing, the Knights wore away the daylight, and beheld from the open tent the sun cast his setting glow over the purple sea. Adeline had long retired from the board, and they now saw her seated with her handmaids on a mound by the

beach ; while the sound of her lute faintly reached their ears. As Montreal caught the air, he turned from the converse, and sighing, half shaded his face with his hand. Somehow or other the two Knights had worn away all the little jealousy or pique which they had conceived against each other at Rome. Both imbued with the soldier-like spirit of the age, their contest in the morning had served to inspire them with that strange kind of respect, and even cordiality, which one brave man even still (how much more at that day !) feels for another, whose courage he has proved while vindicating his own. It is like the discovery of a congenial sentiment hitherto latent ; and, in a life of camps, often establishes sudden and lasting friendship in the very lap of enmity. This feeling had been ripened by their subsequent familiar intercourse, and was increased on Adrian's side by the feeling, that in convincing Montreal of the policy of withdrawing from the Roman territories, he had obtained an advantage that well repaid whatever danger and delay he had undergone.

The sigh, and the altered manner of Montreal, did not escape Adrian, and he naturally connected it with something relating to her whose music had been its evident cause.

"Yon lovely dame," said he, gently, "touches the lute with an exquisite and fairy hand, and that plaintive air seems to my ear as of the minstrelsy of Provence."

"It is the air I taught her," said Montreal, sadly, "married as it is to indifferent words, with which I first wooed a heart that should never have given itself to me ! Ay, young Colonna, many a night has my boat been moored beneath the starlit Sorgia that washes her proud father's halls, and my voice awaked the stillness of the waving sedges with a soldier's serenade. Sweet memories ! bitter fruit !"

"Why bitter ? ye love each other still."

"But I am vowed to celibacy, and Adeline de Courval is leman where she should be wedded dame. Methinks I fret at that thought even more than she,—dear Adeline !"

"Your lady, as all would guess, is then nobly born ?"

"She is," answered Montreal, with a deep and evident feeling which, save in love, rarely, if ever, crossed his hardy breast.

"She is, our tale is a brief one:—we loved each other as children: Her family was wealthier than mine: We were separated. I was given to understand that she abandoned me. I despaired, and in despair I took the cross of St. John. Chance threw us again together. I learned that her love was undecayed. Poor child!—she was even then, sir, but a child! I, wild—reckless—and not unskilled, perhaps, in the arts that woo and win. She could not resist my suit or her own affection!—We fled. In those words you see the thread of my after history. My sword and my Adeline were all my fortune. Society frowned on us. The Church threatened my soul. The Grand Master my life. I became a knight of fortune. Fate and my right hand favoured me. I have made those who scorned me tremble at my name. That name shall yet blaze, a star or a meteor, in the front of troubled nations, and I may yet win by force from the Pontiff the dispensation refused to my prayers. On the same day, I may offer Adeline the diadem and the ring.—E'en of this;—you marked Adeline's cheek!—Seems it not delicate? I like not that changeful flush,—and she moves languidly,—*her* step that was so blithe!"

"Change of scene and the mild south will soon restore her health," said Adrian; "and in your peculiar life she is so little brought in contact with others, especially of her own sex, that I trust she is but seldom made aware of whatever is painful in her situation. And woman's love, Montreal, as we both have learned, is a robe that wraps her from many a storm!"

"You speak kindly," returned the Knight; "but you know not all our cause of grief. Adeline's father, a proud *sieur*, died,—they said of a broken heart,—but old men die of many another disease than that! The mother, a dame who boasted her descent from princes, bore the matter more sternly than the sire; clamoured for revenge,—which was odd, for she is as religious as a Dominican, and revenge is not Christian in a woman, though it is knightly in a man!—Well, my Lord, we had one boy, our only child; he was Adeline's solace in my absence,—his pretty ways were worth the world to her! She loved him so, that, but he had her eyes and looked like her when he slept, I should have been jealous! He grew up in our wild life, strong and comely; the

young rogue, he would have been a brave knight! My evil stars led me to Milan, where I had business with the Visconti. One bright morning in June, our boy was stolen; verily that June was like a December to us!"

"Stolen!—how?—by whom?"

"The first question is answered easily,—the boy was with his nurse in the court-yard, the idle wench left him for but a minute or two—so she avers—to fetch him some childish toy; when she returned he was gone; not a trace left, save his pretty cap with the plume in it! Poor Adeline, many a time have I found her kissing that relic till it was wet with tears!"

"A strange fortune, in truth. But what interest could——"

"I will tell you," interrupted Montreal, "the only conjecture I could form;—Adeline's mother, on learning we had a son, sent to Adeline a letter, that well-nigh broke her heart, reproaching her for her love to me, and so forth, as if that had made her the vilest of the sex. She bade her take compassion on her child, and not bring him up to a robber's life,—so was she pleased to style the bold career of Walter de Montreal. She offered to rear the child in her own dull halls, and fit him, no doubt, for a shaven pate and a monk's cowl. She chafed much that a mother would not part with her treasure! She alone, partly in revenge, partly in silly compassion for Adeline's child, partly, it may be, from some pious fanaticism, could, it so seemed to me, have robbed us of our boy. On inquiry, I learned from the nurse—who, but that she was of the same sex as Adeline, should have tasted my dagger,—that in their walks, a woman of advanced years, but seemingly of humble rank (that might be disguise!) had often stopped, and caressed, and admired the child. I repaired at once to France, sought the old Castle of De Courval;—it had passed to the next heir, and the old widow was gone, none knew whither, but, it was conjectured, to take the veil in some remote convent."

"And you never saw her since?"

"Yes, at Rome," answered Montreal, turning pale; "when last there I chanced suddenly upon her; and then at length I learned my boy's fate, and the truth of my own surmise; she confessed to the theft—and my child was dead! I have not dared to tell

Adeline of this ; it seems to me as if it would be like plucking the shaft from the wounded side—and she would die at once bereft of the uncertainty that rankles within her. She has still a hope—it comforts her ; though my heart bleeds when I think on its vanity. Let this pass, my Colonna.”

And Montreal started to his feet as if he strove, by a strong effort, to shake off the weakness that had crept over him in his narration.

“Think no more of it. Life is short—its thorns are many—let us not neglect any of its flowers. This is piety and wisdom too ; Nature that meant me to struggle and to toil, gave me, happily, the sanguine heart and the elastic soul of France ; and I have lived long enough to own that to die young is not an evil. Come, Lord Adrian, let us join my lady ere you part, if part you must ; the moon will be up soon, and Fondi is but a short journey hence. You know that though I admire not your Petrarch, you with more courtesy laud our Provençal ballads, and you must hear Adeline sing one that you may prize them the more. The race of the Troubadours is dead, but the minstrelsy survives the minstrel !”

Adrian, who scarce knew what comfort to administer to the affliction of his companion, was somewhat relieved by the change in his mood, though his more grave and sensitive nature was a little startled at its suddenness. But, as we have before seen, Montreal's spirit (and this made perhaps its fascination) was as a varying and changeful sky ; the gayest sunshine, and the fiercest storm swept over it in rapid alternation ; and elements of singular might and grandeur, which, properly directed and concentrated, would have made him the blessing and glory of his time, were wielded with a boyish levity, roused into war and desolation, or lulled into repose and smoothness, with all the suddenness of chance, and all the fickleness of caprice.

Sauntering down to the beach, the music of Adeline's lute sounded more distinctly in their ears, and involuntarily they hushed their steps upon the rich and odorous turf, as in a voice, though not powerful, marvellously sweet and clear, and well adapted to the simple fashion of the words and melody, she sang the following stanzas :—

LAY OF THE LADY OF PROVENÇE.

I.

Ah, why art thou sad, my heart? Why
 Darksome and lonely?
 Frowns the face of the happy sky
 Over thee only?

Ah me, ah me!
 Render to joy the earth!
 Grief shuns, not envies, Mirth;
 But leave one quiet spot,
 Where Mirth may enter not,
 To sigh, Ah me!—
 Ah me!

2.

As a bird, though the sky be clear,
 Feels the storm lower;
 My soul bodes the tempest near
 In the sunny hour;

Ah me, ah me!
 Be glad while yet we may!
 I bid thee, my heart, be gay;
 And still I know not why,—
 Thou answerest with a sigh,
 (Fond heart!) Ah me!—
 Ah me!

3.

As this twilight o'er the skies,
 Doubt brings the sorrow;
 Who knows when the daylight dies,
 What waits the morrow?

Ah me, ah me!
 Be blithe, be blithe, my lute,
 Thy strings will soon be mute;
 Be blithe—hark! while it dies,
 The note forewarning, sighs
 Its last—Ah me!—
 Ah me!

“My own Adeline—my sweetest night-bird,” half-whispered Montreal, and softly approaching, he threw himself at his lady's feet—“thy song is too sad for this golden eve.”

“No sound ever went to the heart,” said Adrian, “whose arrow was not feathered by sadness. True sentiment, Montreal, is twin with melancholy, though not with gloom.”

The lady looked softly and approvingly up at Adrian's face; she was pleased with its expression; she was pleased yet more with words of which women rather than men would acknowledge the truth. Adrian returned the look with one of deep and eloquent sympathy and respect; in fact, the short story he had

heard from Montreal had interested him deeply in her; and never to the brilliant queen, to whose court he was bound, did his manner wear so chivalric and earnest a homage as it did to that lone and ill-fated lady on the twilight shores of Terracina.

Adeline blushed slightly and sighed; and then, to break the awkwardness of a pause which had stolen over them, as Montreal, unheeding the last remark of Adrian, was tuning the strings of the lute, she said—"Of course, the Signor di Castello shares the universal enthusiasm for Petrarch?"

"Ay," cried Montreal, "my lady is Petrarch mad, like the rest of them: but all I know is, that never did belted knight and honest lover woo in such fantastic and tortured strains."

"In Italy," answered Adrian, "common language is exaggeration;—but even your own Troubadour poetry might tell you that love, ever seeking a new language of its own, cannot but often run into what to all but lovers seems distortion and conceit."

"Come, dear Signor," said Montreal, placing the lute in Adrian's hands, "let Adeline be the umpire between us, which music—yours or mine—can woo the more blandly."

"Ah," said Adrian, laughing; "I fear me, Sir Knight, you have already bribed the umpire."

Montreal's eyes and Adeline's met, and in that gaze Adeline forgot all her sorrows.

With a practised and skilful hand Adrian touched the strings; and selecting a song which was less elaborate than those mostly in vogue amongst his countrymen, though still conceived in the Italian spirit, and in accordance with the sentiment he had previously expressed to Adeline, he sang as follows:—

LOVE'S EXCUSE FOR SADNESS.

Chide not, beloved, if oft with thee
 I feel not rapture wholly;
 For aye the heart that's fill'd with love,
 Runs o'er in melancholy.
 To streams that glide in noon, the shade
 From summer skies is given;
 So, if my breast reflects the cloud,
 'Tis but the cloud of heaven!
 Thine image glass'd within my soul,
 So well the mirror keepeth;
 That, chide me not, if with the *light*
 The *shadow* also sleepeth.

"And now," said Adrian, as he concluded, "the lute is to you : I but prelude your prize."

The Provençal laughed, and shook his head.—"With any other umpire, I had had my lute broken on my own head, for my conceit in provoking such a rival ; but I must not shrink from a contest I have myself provoked, even though in one day *twice* defeated." And with that, in a deep and exquisitely melodious voice, which wanted only more scientific culture to have challenged any competition, the Knight of St. John poured forth

THE LAY OF THE TROUBADOUR.

I.

Gentle river, the moonbeam is hush'd on thy tide,
On thy pathway of light to my lady I glide.
My boat, where the stream laves the castle, I moor,—
All at rest save the maid and her young Troubadour !
As the stars to the waters that bore
My bark, to my spirit thou art ;
Heaving yet, see it bound to the shore,
So moor'd to thy beauty my heart,—
Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie !

2.

Wilt thou fly from the world ? It hath wealth for the vain ;
But Love breaks his bond when there's gold in the chain :
Wilt thou fly from the world ? It hath courts for the proud ;—
But Love, born in caves, pines to death in the crowd.
Were this bosom thy world, dearest one,
Thy world could not fail to be bright ;
For thou shouldst thyself be its sun,
And what spot could be dim in thy light—
Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie ?

3.

The rich and the great woo thee dearest ; and poor,
Though his fathers were princes, thy young Troubadour !
But his heart never quail'd save to thee, his adored,—
There's no guile in his lute, and no stain on his sword.
Ah, I reck not what sorrows I know,
Could I still on thy solace confide ;
And I care not, though earth be my foe,
If thy soft heart be found by my side,—
Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie !

4.

The maiden she blush'd, and the maiden she sigh'd,
Not a cloud in the sky, not a gale on the tide ;
But though tempest had raged on the wave and the wind,
That castle, methinks, had been still left behind !
Sweet lily, though bow'd by the blast,
(To this bosom transplanted) since then,
Wouldst thou change, could we call the past,
To the rock from thy garden again—
Bel' amie, bel' amie, bel' amie !

Thus they alternated the time with converse and song, as the wooded hills threw their sharp, long shadows over the sea; while from many a mound of waking flowers, and many a copse of citron and orange, relieved by the dark and solemn aloe, stole the summer breeze, laden with mingled odours; and, over the seas, coloured by the slow-fading hues of purple and rose, that the sun had long bequeathed to the twilight, flitted the gay fire-flies that sparkle along that enchanted coast. At length, the moon slowly rose above the dark forest-steeps, gleaming on the gay pavilion and glittering pennon of Montreal,—on the verdant sward,—the polished mail of the soldiers, stretched on the grass in various groups, half-shaded by oaks and cypress, and the war-steeds grazing peaceably together—a wild mixture of the Pastoral and the Iron time.

Adrian, reluctantly reminded of his journey, rose to depart.

“I fear,” said he to Adeline, “that I have already detained you too late in the night air: but selfishness is little considerate.”

“Nay, you see we are prudent,” said Adeline, pointing to Montreal’s mantle, which his provident hand had long since drawn around her form; but if you must part, farewell, and success attend you!”

“We may meet again, I trust,” said Adrian.

Adeline sighed gently; and the Colonna, gazing on her face by the moonlight, to which it was slightly raised, was painfully struck by its almost transparent delicacy. Moved by his compassion, ere he mounted his steed, he drew Montreal aside,—“Forgive me if I seem presumptuous,” said he; “but to one so noble this wild life is scarce a fitting career. I know that, in our time, War consecrates all his children; but surely a settled rank in the court of the Emperor, or an honourable reconciliation with your knightly brethren, were better——”

“Than a Tartar camp and a brigand’s castle,” interrupted Montreal, with some impatience. “This you were about to say—you are mistaken. Society thrust me from her bosom; let society take the fruit it hath sown. ‘A fixed rank,’ say you? some subaltern office, to fight at other men’s command! You know me not: Walter de Montreal was not formed to obey. War when I will and rest when I list, is the motto of my

escutcheon. Ambition proffers me rewards you wot not of; and I am of the mould as of the race of those whose swords have conquered thrones. For the rest, your news of the alliance of Louis of Hungary with your Tribune makes it necessary for the friend of Louis to withdraw from all feud with Rome. Ere the week expire, the owl and the bat may seek refuge in yon grey turrets."

"But your lady?"

"Is inured to change.—God help her, and temper the rough wind to the lamb!"

"Enough, Sir Knight: but should you desire a sure refuge at Rome for one so gentle and so highborn, by the right hand of a knight, I promise a safe roof and an honoured home to the Lady Adeline."

Montreal pressed the offered hand to his heart; then plucking his own hastily away, drew it across his eyes, and joined Adeline, in a silence that showed he dared not trust himself to speak. In a few moments Adrian and his train were on the march; but still the young Colonna turned back, to gaze once more on his wild host and that lovely lady, as they themselves lingered on the moonlit sward, while the sea rippled mournfully on their ears.

It was not many months after that date that the name of Fra Moreale scattered terror and dismay throughout the fair Campania. The right hand of the Hungarian king, in his invasion of Naples, he was chosen afterwards vicar (or vicerent) of Louis in Aversa; and fame and fate seemed to lead him triumphantly along that ambitious career which he had elected, whether bounded by the scaffold or the throne.

BOOK IV.

THE TRIUMPH AND THE POMP.

Allora fama e paura di sì buono reggimento, passa in ogni terra.—Vita di Cola di Rienzi, lib. i. cap. 21.

Then the fame and the fear of that so good government passed into every land.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi.*

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY ANGELO—THE DREAM OF NINA FULFILLED.

THE thread of my story transports us back to Rome. It was in a small chamber, in a ruinous mansion by the base of Mount Aventine, that a young boy sate, one evening, with a woman of a tall and stately form, but somewhat bowed both by infirmity and years. The boy was of a fair and comely presence; and there was that in his bold, frank, undaunted carriage, which made him appear older than he was.

The old woman, seated in the recess of the deep window, was apparently occupied with a Bible that lay open on her knees; but ever and anon she lifted her eyes, and gazed on her young companion with a sad and anxious expression.

"Dame," said the boy, who was busily employed in hewing out a sword of wood, "I would you had seen the show to-day. Why, every day is a show at Rome now! It is show enough to see the Tribune himself on his white steed—(oh, it is so beautiful!)—with his white robes all studded with jewels. But

to-day, as I have just been telling you, the Lady Nina took notice of me, as I stood on the stairs of the Capitol: you know, dame, I had donned my best blue velvet doublet."

"And she called you a fair boy, and asked if you would be her little page; and this has turned thy brain, silly urchin that thou art——"

"But the words are the least: if you saw the Lady Nina, you would own that a smile from her might turn the wisest head in Italy. Oh, how I should like to serve the Tribune! All the lads of my age are mad for him. How they will stare, and envy me at school to-morrow! You know too, dame, that though I was not always brought up at Rome, I am Roman. Every Roman loves Rienzi."

"Ay, for the hour: the cry will soon change. This vanity of thine, Angelo, vexes my old heart. I would thou wert humbler."

"Bastards have their own name to win," said the boy, colouring deeply. "They twit me in the teeth, because I cannot say who my father and mother were."

"They need not," returned the dame, hastily. "Thou comest of noble blood and long descent, though, as I have told thee often, I know not the exact names of thy parents. But what art thou shaping that rough sapling of oak into?"

"A sword, dame, to assist the Tribune against the robbers."

"Alas! I fear me, like all those who seek power in Italy, he is more likely to enlist robbers than to assail them."

"Why, la you there, you live so shut up, that you know and hear nothing, or you would have learned that even that fiercest of all the robbers, Fra Moreale, has at length yielded to the Tribune, and fled from his castle, like a rat from a falling house."

"How, how!" cried the dame; "what say you? Has this plebeian, whom you call the Tribune—has he boldly thrown the gage to that dread warrior? and has Montreal left the Roman territory?"

"Ay, it is the talk of the town. But Fra Moreale seems as much a bugbear to you as to e'er a mother in Rome. Did he ever wrong you, dame?"

"Yes!" exclaimed the old woman, with so abrupt a fierceness that even that hardy boy was startled.

"I wish I could meet him, then," said he, after a pause, as he flourished his mimic weapon.

"Now Heaven forbid! He is a man ever to be shunned by thee, whether for peace or war. Say again this good Tribune holds no terms with the Free Lances."

"Say it again—why all Rome knows it."

"He is pious, too, I have heard; and they do bruit it that he sees visions, and is comforted from above," said the woman, speaking to herself. Then turning to Angelo, she continued,—
"Thou wouldst like greatly to accept the Lady Nina's proffer?"

"Ah, that I should, dame, if you could spare me."

"Child," replied the matron, solemnly, "my sand is nearly run, and my wish is to see thee placed with one who will nurture thy young years, and save thee from a life of licence. That done, I may fulfil my vow, and devote the desolate remnant of my years to God. I will think more of this, my child. Not under such a plebeian's roof shouldst thou have lodged, nor from a stranger's board been fed: but at Rome, my last relative worthy of the trust is dead;—and at the worst, obscure honesty is better than gaudy crime. Thy spirit troubles me already. Back, my child; I must to my closet, and watch and pray."

Thus saying, the old woman, repelling the advance, and silencing the muttered and confused words, of the boy—half affectionate as they were, yet half tetchy and wayward—glided from the chamber.

The boy looked abstractedly at the closing door, and then said to himself—"The dame is always talking riddles: I wonder if she knows more of me than she tells, or if she is any way akin to me. I hope not, for I don't love her much; nor, for that matter, anything else. I wish she would place me with the Tribune's lady, and then we'll see who among the lads will call Angelo Villani bastard."

With that the boy fell to work again at his sword with redoubled vigour. In fact, the cold manner of this female, his sole nurse, companion, substitute for parent, had repelled his affections without subduing his temper; and though not originally

of evil disposition, Angelo Villani was already insolent, cunning, and revengeful; but not, on the other hand, without a quick susceptibility to kindness as to affront, a natural acuteness of understanding, and a great indifference to fear. Brought up in quiet affluence rather than luxury, and living much with his protector, whom he knew but by the name of Ursula, his bearing was graceful, and his air that of the well-born. And it was his carriage, perhaps, rather than his countenance, which, though handsome, was more distinguished for intelligence than beauty, which had attracted the notice of the Tribune's bride. His education was that of one reared for some scholastic profession. He was not only taught to read and write, but had been even instructed in the rudiments of Latin. He did not, however, incline to these studies half so fondly as to the games of his companions, or the shows or riots in the streets, into all of which he managed to thrust himself, and from which he had always the happy dexterity to return safe and unscathed.

The next morning Ursula entered the young Angelo's chamber. "Wear again thy blue doublet to-day," said she; "I would have thee look thy best. Thou shalt go with me to the palace."

"What, to-day?" cried the boy joyfully, half leaping from his bed. "Dear dame Ursula, shall I really then belong to the train of the great Tribune's lady?"

"Yes; and leave the old woman to die alone! Your joy becomes you,—but ingratitude is in your blood. Ingratitude! Oh, it has burned my heart into ashes—and yours, boy, can no longer find a fuel in the dry crumbling cinders."

"Dear dame, you are always so biting. You know you said you wished to retire into a convent, and I was too troublesome a charge for you. But you delight in rebuking me, justly or unjustly."

"My task is over," said Ursula, with a deep-drawn sigh.

The boy answered not; and the old woman retired with a heavy step, and, it may be, a heavier heart. When he joined her in their common apartment, he observed what his joy had previously blinded him to—that Ursula did not wear her usual plain and sober dress. The gold chain, rarely assumed then by

women not of noble birth—though, in the other sex, affected also by public functionaries and wealthy merchants—glittered upon a robe of the rich flowered stuffs of Venice, and the clasps that confined the vest at the throat and waist were adorned with jewels of no common price.

Angelo's eye was struck by the change, but he felt a more manly pride in remarking that the old lady became it well. Her air and mien were indeed those of one to whom such garments were habitual; and they seemed that day more than usually austere and stately.

She smoothed the boy's ringlets, drew his short mantle more gracefully over his shoulder, and then placed in his belt a poniard whose handle was richly studded, and a purse well filled with florins.

"Learn to use both discreetly," said she; "and whether I live or die, you will never require to wield the poniard to procure the gold."

"This, then," cried Angelo, enchanted, "is a real poniard to fight the robbers with! Ah, with this I should not fear *Fra Moreale*, who wronged thee so. I trust I may yet avenge thee, though thou didst rate me so just now for ingratitude."

"I *am* avenged. Nourish not such thoughts, my son, they are sinful; at least I fear so. Draw to the board and eat; we will go betimes, as petitioners should do."

Angelo had soon finished his morning meal, and sallying with Ursula to the porch, he saw, to his surprise, four of those servitors who then usually attended persons of distinction, and who were to be hired in every city, for the convenience of strangers or the holyday ostentation of the gayer citizens.

"How grand we are to-day!" said he, clapping his hands with an eagerness which Ursula failed not to reprove.

"It is not for vain show," she added, "which true nobility can well dispense with, but that we may the more readily gain admittance to the palace. These princes of yesterday are not easy of audience to the over humble."

"Oh! but you are wrong this time," said the boy. "The Tribune gives audience to all men, the poorest as the richest. Nay, there is not a ragged boor, or a bare-footed friar, who does

not win access to him sooner than the proudest baron. That's why the people love him so. And he devotes one day of the week to receiving the widows and the orphans ;—and you know, dame, I am an orphan.”

Ursula, already occupied with her own thoughts, did not answer, and scarcely heard, the boy ; but leaning on his young arm, and preceded by the footmen to clear the way, passed slowly towards the palace of the Capitol.

A wonderful thing would it have been to a more observant eye, to note the change which two or three short months of the stern but salutary and wise rule of the Tribune had effected in the streets of Rome. You no longer beheld the gaunt and mail-clad forms of foreign mercenaries stalking through the vistas, or grouped in lazy insolence before the embattled porches of some gloomy palace. The shops, that in many quarters had been closed for years, were again open, glittering with wares and bustling with trade. The thoroughfares, formerly either silent as death, or crossed by some affrighted and solitary passenger with quick steps, and eyes that searched every corner,—or resounding with the roar of a pauper rabble, or the open feuds of savage nobles, now exhibited the regular, and wholesome, and mingled streams of civilized life, whether bound to pleasure or to commerce. Carts and waggons laden with goods which had passed in safety by the dismantled holds of the robbers of the Campagna, rattled cheerfully over the pathways. “Never, perhaps,”—to use the translation adapted from the Italian authorities, by a modern and by no means a partial historian¹—“never, perhaps, has the energy and effect of a single mind been more remarkably felt than in the sudden reformation of Rome by the Tribune Rienzi. A den of robbers was converted to the discipline of a camp or convent. ‘In this time,’ says the historian,² ‘did the woods begin to rejoice that they were no longer infested with robbers ; the oxen began to plough ; the pilgrims visited the sanctuaries ;³ the roads and inns were replenished with travellers : trade, plenty, and good faith, were restored in the

¹ Gibbon.

² *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. c. 9.

³ Gibbon : the words in the original are “*li pellegrini cominciaro a fere la cerca per la santuaria*.”

markets ; and a purse of gold might be exposed without danger in the midst of the highways.'"

Amidst all these evidences of comfort and security to the people—some dark and discontented countenances might be seen mingled in the crowd, and whenever one who wore the livery of the Colonna or the Orsini felt himself jostled by the throng, a fierce hand moved involuntarily to the sword-belt, and a half-suppressed oath was ended with an indignant sigh. Here and there too,—contrasting the redecorated, refurnished, and smiling shops—heaps of rubbish before the gate of some haughty mansion testified the abasement of fortifications which the owner impotently resented as a sacrilege. Through such streets and such throngs did the party we accompany wend their way, till they found themselves amidst crowds assembled before the entrance of the Capitol. The officers there stationed kept, however, so discreet and dexterous an order, that they were not long detained ; and now in the broad place or court of that memorable building, they saw the open doors of the great justice-hall, guarded but by a single sentinel, and in which, for six hours daily, did the Tribune hold his court, for "patient to hear, swift to redress, inexorable to punish, his tribunal was always accessible to the poor and stranger."¹

Not, however, to that hall did the party bend its way, but to the entrance which admitted to the private apartments of the palace. And here the pomp, the gaud, the more than regal magnificence, of the residence of the Tribune, strongly contrasted the patriarchal simplicity which marked his justice court.

Even Ursula, not unaccustomed, of yore, to the luxurious state of Italian and French principalities, seemed roused into surprise at the hall crowded with retainers in costly liveries, the marble and gilded columns wreathed with flowers, and the gorgeous banners wrought with the blended arms of the Republican City and the Pontifical See, which blazed aloft and around.

Scarce knowing whom to address in such an assemblage, Ursula was relieved from her perplexity by an officer attired in a suit of crimson and gold, who, with a grave and formal

¹ Gibbon.

decorum, which indeed reigned throughout the whole retinue, demanded, respectfully, whom she sought? "The Signora Nina!" replied Ursula, drawing up her stately person, with a natural, though somewhat antiquated, dignity. There was something foreign in the accent, which influenced the officer's answer.

"To-day, madam, I fear that the Signora receives only the Roman ladies. To-morrow is that appointed for all foreign dames of distinction."

Ursula, with a slight impatience of tone, replied—

"My business is of that nature which is welcome on any day, at palaces. I come, Signor, to lay certain presents at the Signora's feet, which I trust she will deign to accept."

"And say, Signor," added the boy, abruptly, "that Angelo Villani, whom the Lady Nina honoured yesterday with her notice, is no stranger but a Roman; and comes, as she bade him, to proffer to the Signora his homage and devotion."

The grave officer could not refrain a smile at the pert, yet not ungraceful, boldness of the boy.

"I remember me, Master Angelo Villani," he replied, "that the Lady Nina spoke to you by the great staircase. Madam, I will do your errand. Please to follow me to an apartment more fitting your sex and seeming."

With that the officer led the way across the hall to a broad staircase of white marble, along the centre of which were laid those rich Eastern carpets which at that day, when rushes strewed the chambers of an English monarch, were already common to the greater luxury of Italian palaces. Opening a door at the first flight, he ushered Ursula and her young charge into a lofty ante-chamber, hung with arras of wrought velvets; while over the opposite door, through which the officer now vanished, were blazoned the armorial bearings which the Tribune so constantly introduced in all his pomp, not more from the love of show, than from his politic desire to mingle with the keys of the Pontiff the heraldic insignia of the Republic.

"Philip of Valois is not housed like this man!" muttered Ursula. "If this last, I shall have done better for my charge than I recked of."

The officer soon returned, and led them across an apartment of vast extent, which was indeed the great reception chamber of the palace. Four-and-twenty columns of the Oriental alabaster which had attested the spoils of the later emperors, and had been disinterred from forgotten ruins, to grace the palace of the Reviver of the old Republic, supported the light roof, which, half Gothic, half classic, in its architecture, was inlaid with gilded and purple mosaics. The tessellated floor was covered in the centre with cloth of gold, the walls were clothed, at intervals, with the same gorgeous hangings, relieved by panels freshly painted in the most glowing colours, with mystic and symbolical designs. At the upper end of this royal chamber, two steps ascended to the place of the Tribune's throne, above which was the canopy wrought with the eternal armorial bearings of the Pontiff and the City.

Traversing this apartment, the officer opened the door at its extremity, which admitted to a small chamber, crowded with pages in rich dresses of silver and blue velvet. There were few amongst them older than Angelo; and, from their general beauty, they seemed the very flower and blossom of the city.

Short time had Angelo to gaze on his comrades that were to be:—another minute, and he and his protectress were in the presence of the Tribune's bride.

The chamber was not large—but it was large enough to prove that the beautiful daughter of Raselli had realised her visions of vanity and splendour.

It was an apartment that mocked description—it seemed a cabinet for the gems of the world. The daylight, shaded by high and deep-set casements of stained glass, streamed in a purple and mellow hue over all that the art of that day boasted most precious, or regal luxury held most dear. The candelabras of the silver workmanship of Florence; the carpets and stuffs of the East; the draperies of Venice and Genoa; paintings like the illuminated missals, wrought in gold, and those lost colours of blue and crimson; antique marbles, which spoke of the bright days of Athens; tables of disinterred mosaics, their freshness preserved as by magic; censers of gold that steamed with the odours of Araby, yet so subdued as not to deaden the healthier

scent of flowers, which blushed in every corner from their marble and alabaster vases; a small and spirit-like fountain, which seemed to gush from among wreaths of roses, diffusing in its diamond and fairy spray, a scarce felt coolness to the air;—all these, and such as these, which it were vain work to detail, congregated in the richest luxuriance, harmonised with the most exquisite taste, uniting the ancient arts with the modern, amazed and intoxicated the sense of the beholder. It was not so much the cost, nor the luxury, that made the character of the chamber; it was a certain gorgeous and almost sublime phantasy,—so that it seemed rather the fabled retreat of an enchantress, at whose word genii ransacked the earth, and fairies arranged the produce, than the grosser splendour of an earthly queen. Behind the piled cushions upon which Nina half reclined, stood four girls, beautiful as nymphs, with fans of the rarest feathers, and at her feet lay one older than the rest, whose lute, though now silent, attested her legitimate occupation.

But, had the room in itself seemed somewhat too fantastic and overcharged in its prodigal ornaments, the form and face of Nina would at once have rendered all appropriate: so completely did she seem the natural Spirit of the Place; so wonderfully did her beauty, elated as it now was with contented love, gratified vanity, exultant hope, body forth the brightest vision that ever floated before the eyes of Tasso, when he wrought into one immortal shape the glory of the Enchantress with the allurements of the Woman.

Nina half rose as she saw Ursula, whose sedate and mournful features involuntarily testified her surprise and admiration at a loveliness so rare and striking, but who, undazzled by the splendour around, soon recovered her wonted self-composure, and seated herself on the cushion to which Nina pointed, while the young visitor remained standing, and spell-bound by childish wonder, in the centre of the apartment. Nina recognised him with a smile.

“Ah, my pretty boy, whose quick eye and bold air caught my fancy yesterday! Have you come to accept my offer? Is it you, madam, who claim this fair child?”

“Lady,” replied Ursula, “my business here is brief: by a train

of events, needless to weary you with narrating, this boy from his infancy fell to my charge—a weighty and anxious trust to one whose thoughts are beyond the barrier of life. I have reared him as became a youth of gentle blood; for on both sides, lady, he is noble, though an orphan, motherless and sireless.”

“Poor child!” said Nina, compassionately.

“Growing now,” continued Ursula, “oppressed by years, and desirous only to make my peace with Heaven, I journeyed hither some months since, in the design to place the boy with a relation of mine; and, that trust fulfilled, to take the vows in the City of the Apostle. Alas! I found my kinsman dead, and a baron of wild and dissolute character was his heir. Here remaining, perplexed and anxious, it seemed to me the voice of Providence when, yester-evening, the child told me you had been pleased to honour him with your notice. Like the rest of Rome, he has already learned enthusiasm for the Tribune—devotion to the Tribune’s bride. Will you, in truth, admit him of your household? He will not dishonour your protection by his blood, nor, I trust, by his bearing.”

“I would take his face for his guarantee, madam, even without so distinguished a recommendation as your own. Is he Roman? His name then must be known to me.”

“Pardon me, lady,” replied Ursula: “he bears the name of Angelo Villani—not that of his sire or mother. The honour of a noble house for ever condemns his parentage to rest unknown. He is the offspring of a love unsanctioned by the Church.”

“He is the more to be loved, then, and to be pitied—victim of sin not his own!” answered Nina, with moistened eyes, as she saw the deep and burning blush that covered the boy’s cheeks. “With the Tribune’s reign commences a new era of nobility, when rank and knighthood shall be won by a man’s own merit—not that of his ancestors. Fear not, madam: in my house he shall know no slight.”

Ursula was moved from her pride by the kindness of Nina; she approached with involuntary reverence, and kissed the Signora’s hand—

“May our Lady reward your noble heart!” said she: “and

now my mission is ended, and my earthly goal is won. Add only, lady, to your inestimable favours, one more. These jewels"—and Ursula drew from her robe a casket, touched the spring, and the lid flying back, discovered jewels of great size and the most brilliant water,—“these jewels,” she continued, laying the casket at Nina’s feet, “once belonging to the princely house of Thoulouse, are valueless to me and mine. Suffer me to think that they are transferred to one whose queenly brow will give them a lustre it cannot borrow.”

“How!” said Nina, colouring very deeply; “think you, madam, my kindness can be bought? What woman’s kindness ever was? Nay, nay—take back the gifts, or I shall pray you to take back your boy.”

Ursula was astonished and confounded: to her experience such abstinence was a novelty, and she scarcely knew how to meet it. Nina perceived her embarrassment with a haughty and triumphant smile, and then, regaining her former courtesy of demeanour, said, with a grave sweetness—

“The Tribune’s hands are clean,—the Tribune’s wife must not be suspected. Rather, madam, should I press upon *you* some token of exchange for the fair charge you have committed to me. Your jewels hereafter may profit the boy in his career: reserve them for one who needs them.”

“No, lady,” said Ursula, rising and lifting her eyes to heaven; —“they shall buy masses for his mother’s soul; for him I shall reserve a competence when his years require it. Lady, accept the thanks of a wretched and desolate heart. Fare you well!”

She turned to quit the room, but with so faltering and weak a step, that Nina, touched and affected, sprang up, and with her own hand guided the old woman across the room, whispering comfort and soothing to her; while, as they reached the door, the boy rushed forward, and, clasping Ursula’s robe, sobbed out—“Dear dame, not one farewell for your little Angelo? Forgive him all he has cost you! Now, for the first time, I feel how wayward and thankless I have been.”

The old woman caught him in her arms, and kissed him passionately; when the boy, as if a thought suddenly struck him, drew forth the purse she had given him, and said, in a

choked and scarce articulate voice,—“And let this, dearest dame, go in masses for my poor *father's* soul; for *he* is dead, too, you know!”

These words seemed to freeze at once all the tenderer emotions of Ursula. She put back the boy with the same chilling and stern severity of aspect and manner which had so often before repressed him: and recovering her self-possession, at once quitted the apartment without saying another word. Nina, surprised, but still pitying her sorrow and respecting her age, followed her steps across the pages' ante-room and the reception-chamber, even to the foot of the stairs,—a condescension the haughtiest princess of Rome could not have won from her; and returning, saddened and thoughtful, she took the boy's hand, and affectionately kissed his forehead.

“Poor boy!” she said, “it seems as if Providence had made me select thee yesterday from the crowd, and thus conducted thee to thy proper refuge. For to whom should come the friendless and the orphans of Rome, but to the palace of Rome's first Magistrate?” Turning then to her attendants, she gave them instructions as to the personal comforts of her new charge, which evinced that if power had ministered to her vanity, it had not steeled her heart. Angelo Villani lived to repay her *well!*

She retained the boy in her presence, and conversing with him familiarly, she was more and more pleased with his bold spirit and frank manner. Their conversation was however interrupted, as the day advanced, by the arrival of several ladies of the Roman nobility. And then it was that Nina's virtues receded into shade, and her faults appeared. She could not resist the woman's triumph over those arrogant signoras who now cringed in homage where they had once slighted with disdain. She affected the manner of, she demanded the respect due to, a queen. And by many of those dexterous arts which the sex know so well, she contrived to render her very courtesy a humiliation to her haughty guests. Her commanding beauty and her graceful intellect saved her, indeed, from the vulgar insolence of the upstart; but yet more keenly stung the pride, by forbidding to those she mortified the retaliation of

contempt. Hers were the covert taunt—the smiling affront—the sarcasm in the mask of compliment—the careless exaction of respect in trifles, which could not outwardly be resented, but which could not inly be forgiven.

“Fair day to the Signora Colonna,” said she to the proud wife of the proud Stephen; “we passed your palace yesterday. How fair it now seems, relieved from those gloomy battlements which it must often have saddened you to gaze upon. Signora (turning to one of the Orsini), your lord has high favour with the Tribune, who destines him to great command. His fortunes are secured, and we rejoice at it; for no man more loyally serves the state. Have you seen, fair Lady of Frangipani, the last verses of Petrarch in honour of my lord?—they rest yonder. May we so far venture as to request you to point out their beauties to the Signora di Savelli? We rejoice, noble Lady of Malatesta, to observe that your eyesight is so well restored. The last time we met, though we stood next to you in the revels of the Lady Giulia, you seemed scarce to distinguish us from the pillar by which we stood!”

“Must this insolence be endured?” whispered the Signora Frangipani to the Signora Malatesta.

“Hush, hush; if ever it be *our* day again!”

CHAPTER II.

THE BLESSING OF A COUNCILLOR WHOSE INTERESTS AND HEART ARE OUR OWN.
—THE STRAWS THROWN UPWARD—DO THEY PORTEND A STORM?

IT was later that day than usual, when Rienzi returned from his tribunal to the apartments of the palace. As he traversed the reception hall, his countenance was much flushed; his teeth were set firmly, like a man who has taken a strong resolution from which he will not be moved; and his brow was dark with that settled and fearful frown which the describers of his personal appearance have not failed to notice as the characteristic of an anger the more deadly because invariably just. Close at his

heels followed the Bishop of Orvietto and the aged Stephen Colonna. "I tell you, my lords," said Rienzi, "that ye plead in vain. Rome knows no distinction between ranks. The law is blind to the agent—lynx-eyed to the deed."

"Yet," said Raimond, hesitatingly, "bethink thee, Tribune; the nephew of two cardinals, and himself once a senator."

Rienzi halted abruptly, and faced his companions. "My Lord Bishop," said he, "does not this make the crime more inexcusable? Look you, thus it reads:—A vessel from Avignon to Naples, charged with the revenues of Provence to Queen Joanna, on whose cause, mark you, we now hold solemn council, is wrecked at the mouth of the Tiber; with that, Martino di Porto—a noble, as you say—the holder of that fortress whence he derives his title,—doubly bound by gentle blood and by immediate neighbourhood to succour the oppressed—falls upon the vessel with his troops (what hath the rebel with armed troops?)—and pillages the vessel like a common robber. He is apprehended—brought to my tribunal—receives fair trial—is condemned to die. Such is the law;—what more would ye have?"

"Mercy," said the Colonna.

Rienzi folded his arms, and laughed disdainfully. "I never heard my Lord Colonna plead for mercy when a peasant had stolen the bread that was to feed his famishing children."

"Between a peasant and a prince, Tribune, I, for one, recognise a distinction:—the bright blood of an Orsini is not to be shed like that of a base plebeian——"

"Which, I remember me," said Rienzi, in a low voice, "you deemed small matter enough when my boy-brother fell beneath the wanton spear of your proud son. Wake not that memory, I warn you; let it sleep.—For shame, old Colonna—for shame! so near the grave, where the worm levels all flesh, and preaching, with those grey hairs, the uncharitable distinction between man and man. Is there not distinction enough at the best? Does not one wear purple, and the other rags? Hath not one ease and the other toil? Doth not the one banquet while the other starves? Do I nourish any mad scheme to level the ranks which society renders a necessary evil? No, I war no more

with Dives than with Lazarus. But before man's judgment-seat, as before God's, Lazarus and Dives are made equal. No more."

Colonna drew his robe round him with great haughtiness, and bit his lip in silence. Raimond interposed.

"All this is true, Tribune. But," and he drew Rienzi aside, "you know we must be politic as well as just. Nephew to two Cardinals, what enmity will not this provoke at Avignon!"

"Vex not yourself, holy Raimond, I will answer it to the Pontiff." While they spoke, the bell tolled heavily and loudly.

Colonna started.

"Great Tribune," said he, with a slight sneer, "deign to pause ere it be too late. I know not that I ever before bent to you a suppliant; and I ask you now to spare mine own foe. Stephen Colonna prays Cola di Rienzi to spare the life of an Orsini."

"I understand thy taunt, old lord," said Rienzi, calmly, "but I resent it not. You are foe to the Orsini, yet you plead for him—it sounds generous; but hark you,—you are more a friend to your order than a foe to your rival. You cannot bear that one, great enough to have contended with you, should perish like a thief. I give full praise to such noble forgiveness; but I am no noble, and I do not sympathise with it. One word more;—if this were the sole act of fraud and violence that this bandit baron had committed, your prayers should plead for him; but is not his life notorious? Has he not been from boyhood the terror and disgrace of Rome? How many matrons violated, merchants pillaged, peaceful men stilettoed in the daylight, rise in dark witness against the prisoner? And for such a man do I live to hear an aged prince and a pope's vicar plead for mercy?—Fie, fie! But I will be even with ye. The next *poor* man whom the law sentences to death, for your sake will I pardon."

Raimond again drew aside the Tribune, while Colonna struggled to suppress his rage.

"My friend," said the Bishop, "the nobles will feel this as an insult to their whole order; the very pleading of Orsini's worst foe must convince thee of this. Martino's blood will seal

their reconciliation with each other, and they will be as one man against thee."

"Be it so: with God and the People on my side, I will dare, though a Roman, to be just. The bell ceases—you are already too late." So saying, Rienzi threw open the casement; and by the Staircase of the Lion rose a gibbet from which swung with a creaking sound, arrayed in his patrician robes, the yet palpitating corpse of Martino di Porto.

"Behold!" said the Tribune, sternly, "thus die all robbers. For *traitors*, the same law has the axe and the scaffold!"

Raimond drew back and turned pale. Not so the veteran noble. Tears of wounded pride started from his eyes; he approached, leaning on his staff, to Rienzi, touched him on his shoulder, and said,—

"Tribune, a judge has lived to envy his victim!"

Rienzi turned with an equal pride to the Baron.

"We forgive idle words in the aged. My Lord, have you done with us?—we would be alone."

"Give me thy arm, Raimond," said Stephen. "Tribune—farewell. Forget that the Colonna sued thee,—an easy task, methinks; for, wise as you are, you forget what every one else can remember."

"Ay, my Lord, what?"

"Birth, Tribune, birth—that's all!"

"The Signor Colonna has taken up my old calling, and turned a wit," returned Rienzi, with an indifferent and easy tone.

Then following Raimond and Stephen with his eyes, till the door closed upon them, he muttered, "Insolent! were it not for Adrian, thy grey beard should not bear thee harmless. Birth! what Colonna would not boast himself, if he could, the grandson of an emperor?—Old man, there is danger in thee which must be watched." With that he turned musingly towards the casement, and again that grisly spectacle of death met his eye. The people below, assembled in large concourse, rejoiced at the execution of one whose whole life had been infamy and rapine—but who had seemed beyond justice—with all the fierce clamour that marks the exultation of the rabble over a crushed foe. And where Rienzi stood, he heard their shouts of "Long live

the Tribune, the just judge, Rome's liberator!" But at that time other thoughts deafened his senses to the popular enthusiasm.

"My poor brother!" he said, with tears in his eyes, "it was owing to this man's crimes—and to a crime almost similar to that for which he has now suffered—that thou wert entrained to the slaughter; and they who had no pity for the lamb, clamour for compassion to the wolf! Ah, wert thou living now, how these proud heads would bend to thee; though dead, thou wert not worthy of a thought. God rest thy gentle soul, and keep my ambition pure as it was when we walked at twilight, side by side together!"

The Tribune shut the casement, and turning away, sought the chamber of Nina. On hearing his step without, she had already risen from the couch, her eyes sparkling, her bosom heaving; and as he entered, she threw herself on his neck, and murmured as she nestled to his breast,—“Ah, the hours since we parted!”

It was a singular thing to see that proud lady, proud of her beauty, her station, her new honours;—whose gorgeous vanity was already the talk of Rome, and the reproach to Rienzi,—how suddenly and miraculously she seemed changed in his presence! Blushing and timid, all pride in herself seemed merged in her proud love for him. No woman ever loved to the full extent of the passion who did not venerate where she loved, and who did not feel humbled (delighted in that humility) by her exaggerated and overweening estimate of the superiority of the object of her worship.

And it might be the consciousness of this distinction between himself and all other created things which continued to increase the love of the Tribune to his bride, to blind him to her failings towards others, and to indulge her in a magnificence of parade, which, though to a certain point politic to assume, was carried to an extent which, if it did not conspire to produce his downfall, has served the Romans with an excuse for their own cowardice and desertion, and historians with a plausible explanation of causes they had not the industry to fathom. Rienzi returned his wife's caresses with an equal affection, and bending down to her beautiful face, the sight was sufficient to chase from his brow,

the emotions, whether severe or sad, which had lately darkened its broad expense.

"Thou hast not been abroad this morning, Nina!"

"No, the heat was oppressive. But nevertheless, Cola, I have not lacked company—half the matronage of Rome has crowded the palace."

"Ah, I warrant it.—But yon boy, is he not a new face?"

"Hush, Cola, speak to him kindly, I entreat: of his story anon. Angelo, approach. You see your new master, the Tribune of Rome."

Angelo approached with a timidity not his wont, for an air of majesty was at all times natural to Rienzi, and since his power it had naturally taken a graver and austerer aspect, which impressed those who approached him, even the ambassadors of princes, with a certain involuntary awe. The Tribune smiled at the effect he saw he had produced, and being by temper fond of children, and affable to all but the great, he hastened to dispel it. He took the child affectionately in his arms, kissed him, and bade him welcome.

"May we have a son as fair!" he whispered to Nina, who blushed, and turned away.

"Thy name, my little friend?"

"Angelo Villani."

"A Tuscan name. There is a man of letters at Florence, doubtless writing our annals from hearsay at this moment, called Villani. Perhaps akin to thee?"

"I have no kin," said the boy, bluntly; "and therefore I shall the better love the Signora and honour you, if you will let me. I am Roman—all the Roman boys honour Rienzi."

"Do they, my brave lad?" said the Tribune, colouring with pleasure; "that is a good omen of my continued prosperity." He put down the boy, and threw himself on the cushions, while Nina placed herself on a kind of low stool beside him.

"Let us be alone," said he; and Nina motioned to the attendant maidens to withdraw.

"Take my new page with you," said she; "he is yet, perhaps, too fresh from home to enjoy the company of his giddy brethren."

When they were alone, Nina proceeded to narrate to Rienzi the adventure of the morning ; but though he seemed outwardly to listen, his gaze was on vacancy, and he was evidently abstracted and self-absorbed. At length, as she concluded, he said, "Well, Nina, you have acted as ever, kindly and nobly. Let us to other themes. I am in danger."

"Danger !" echoed Nina, turning pale.

"Why, the word must not appal you—you have a spirit like mine, that scorns fear ; and, for that reason, Nina, in all Rome you are my only confidant. It was not only to glad me with thy beauty, but to cheer me with thy counsel, to support me with thy valour, that Heaven gave me thee as a helpmate."

"Now, our Lady bless thee for those words !" said Nina, kissing the hand that hung over her shoulder ; "and if I started at the word danger, it was but the woman's thought of thee,—an unworthy thought, my Cola, for glory and danger go together. And I am as ready to share the last as the first. If the hour of trial ever come, none of thy friends shall be so faithful to thy side as this weak form but undaunted heart."

"I know it, my own Nina ; I know it," said Rienzi, rising, and pacing the chamber with large and rapid strides. "Now listen to me. Thou knowest that to govern in safety, it is my policy as my pride to govern justly. To govern justly is an awful thing, when mighty Barons are the culprits. Nina, for an open and audacious robbery, our court has sentenced Martin of the Orsini, the Lord of Porto, to death. His corse swings now on the Staircase of the Lion."

"A dreadful doom !" said Nina, shuddering.

"True ; but by his death thousands of poor and honest men may live in peace. It is not that which troubles me ; the Barons resent the deed, as an insult to them that law should touch a noble. They will rise—they will rebel. I foresee the storm—not the spell to allay it."

Nina paused a moment,—*"They have taken,"* she then said, *"a solemn oath on the Eucharist not to bear arms against thee."*

"Perjury is a light addition to theft and murder," answered Rienzi, with his sarcastic smile.

"But the people are faithful"

"Yes, but in a civil war (which the saints forefend!) those combatants are the stanchest who have no home but their armour, no calling but the sword. The trader will not leave his trade at the toll of a bell every day; but the Barons' soldiery are ready at all hours."

"To be strong," said Nina,—who, summoned to the councils of her lord, showed an intellect not unworthy of the honour,—
"to be strong in dangerous times, authority must *seem* strong. By showing no fear, you may prevent the cause of fear."

"My own thought!" returned Rienzi, quickly. "You know that half my power with these Barons is drawn from the homage rendered to me by foreign states. When from every city in Italy the ambassadors of crowned princes seek the alliance of the Tribune, they must veil their resentment at the rise of the Plebeian. On the other hand, to be strong abroad I must seem strong at home: the vast design I have planned, and, as by a miracle, begun to execute, will fail at once if it seem abroad to be intrusted to an unsteady and fluctuating power. That design (continued Rienzi, pausing, and placing his hand on a marble bust of the young Augustus) is greater than his, whose profound yet icy soul united Italy in subjection,—for it would unite Italy in freedom;—yes! could we but form one great federative league of all the States of Italy, each governed by its own laws, but united for mutual and common protection against the Attilas of the North, with Rome for their Metropolis and their Mother, this age and this brain would have wrought an enterprise which men should quote till the sound of the last trump!"

"I know thy divine scheme," said Nina, catching his enthusiasm; "and what if there be danger in attaining it? Have we not mastered the greatest danger in the first step?"

"Right, Nina, right! Heaven (and the Tribune, who ever recognised, in his own fortunes, the agency of the hand above, crossed himself reverently) will preserve him to whom it hath vouchsafed such lofty visions of the future redemption of the Land of the true Church, and the liberty and advancement of its children! This I trust: already many of the cities of Tuscany have entered into treaties for the formation of this league; nor from a single tyrant, save John di Vico, have I

received aught but fair words and flattering promises. The time seems ripe for the grand stroke of all."

"And what is that?" demanded Nina, wonderingly.

"Defiance to all foreign interference. By what right does a synod of stranger princes give Rome a king in some Teuton Emperor? Rome's people alone should choose Rome's governor;—and shall we cross the Alps to render the title of our master to the descendants of the Goth?"

Nina was silent: the custom of choosing the sovereign by a diet beyond the Rhine, reserving only the ceremony of his subsequent coronation for the mock assent of the Romans, however degrading to that people, and however hostile to all notions of substantial independence, was so unquestioned at that time, that Rienzi's daring suggestion left her amazed and breathless, prepared as she was for any scheme, however extravagantly bold.

"How!" said she, after a long pause; "do I understand aright? Can you mean defiance to the Emperor?"

"Why, listen: at this moment there are two pretenders to the throne of Rome—to the Imperial crown of Italy—a Bohemian and a Bavarian. To their election our assent—Rome's assent—is not requisite—not asked. Can we be called free—can we boast ourselves republican—when a stranger and a barbarian is thus thrust upon our necks? No, we will be free in reality as in name. Besides (continued the Tribune, in a calmer tone), this seems to me politic as well as daring. The people incessantly demand wonders from me: how can I more nobly dazzle, more virtuously win them, than by asserting their inalienable right to choose their own rulers? The daring will awe the Barons, and foreigners themselves; it will give a startling example to all Italy; it will be the first brand of a universal blaze. It shall be done, and with a pomp that befits the deed!"

"Cola," said Nina, hesitatingly, "your eagle spirit often ascends where mine flags to follow; yet be not over bold."

"Nay, did you not, a moment since, preach a different doctrine? To be strong, was I not to seem strong?"

"May fate preserve you!" said Nina, with a foreboding sigh.

"Fate!" cried Rienzi; "there is *no* fate! Between the thought and the success, God is the only agent; and (he added with a voice of deep solemnity) I shall not be deserted. Visions by night, even while thine arms are around me; omens and impulses, stirring and divine, by day, even in the midst of the living crowd—encourage my path, and point my goal. Now, even now, a voice seems to whisper in my ear—'Pause not; tremble not; waver not;—for the eye of the All-Seeing is upon thee, and the hand of the All-Powerful shall protect!'"

As Rienzi thus spoke, his face grew pale, his hair seemed to bristle, his tall and proud form trembled visibly, and presently he sunk down on a seat, and covered his face with his hands.

An awe crept over Nina, though not unaccustomed to such strange and preternatural emotions, which appeared yet the more singular in one who in common life was so calm, stately, and self-possessed. But with every increase of prosperity and power, those emotions seemed to increase in their fervour, as if in such increase the devout and overwrought superstition of the Tribune recognised additional proof of a mysterious guardianship mightier than the valour and art of man.

She approached fearfully, and threw her arms around him, but without speaking.

Ere yet the Tribune had well recovered himself, a slight tap at the door was heard, and the sound seemed at once to recall his self-possession.

"Enter," he said, lifting his face, to which the wonted colour slowly returned.

An officer, half-opening the door, announced that the person he had sent for waited his leisure.

"I come!—Core of my heart," (he whispered to Nina,) "we will sup alone to-night, and will converse more on these matters:" so saying, with somewhat less than his usual loftiness of mien, he left the room, and sought his cabinet, which lay at the other side of the reception chamber. Here he found Cecco del Vecchio.

"How, my bold fellow," said the Tribune, assuming with wonderful ease that air of friendly equality which he always adopted with those of the lower class, and which made a striking contrast with the majesty, no less natural, which marked his

manner to the great. "How now, my Cecco! Thou bearest thyself bravely, I see, during these sickly heats; we labourers—for both of us labour, Cecco—are too busy to fall ill as the idle do, in the summer, or the autumn, of Roman skies. I sent for thee, Cecco, because I would know how thy fellow-craftsmen are like to take the Orsini's execution."

"Oh! Tribune," replied the artificer, who, now familiarized with Rienzi, had lost much of his earlier awe of him, and who regarded the Tribune's power as partly his own creation; "they are already out of their honest wits at your courage in punishing the great men as you would the small."

"So;—I am repaid! But hark you, Cecco, it will bring perhaps, hot work upon us. Every Baron will dread lest it be his turn next, and dread will make them bold, like rats in despair. We may have to fight for the Good Estate."

"With all my heart, Tribune," answered Cecco, gruffly. "I, for one, am no craven."

"Then keep the same spirit in all your meetings with the artificers. I fight for the people. The people at a pinch must fight with me."

"They will," replied Cecco; "they will!"

"Cecco, this city is under the spiritual dominion of the Pontiff—so be it—it is an honour, not a burthen. But the *temporal* dominion, my friend, should be with Romans only. Is it not a disgrace to Republican Rome, that while we now speak, certain barbarians, whom we never heard of, should be deciding beyond the Alps on the merits of two sovereigns whom we never saw? Is not this a thing to be resisted? An Italian city,—what hath it to do with a Bohemian Emperor?"

"Little eno', St. Paul knows!" said Cecco.

"Should it not be a claim questioned?"

"I think so!" replied the smith.

"And if found an outrage on our ancient laws, should it not be a claim resisted?"

"Not a doubt of it."

"Well, go to! The archives assure me that never was Emperor lawfully crowned but by the free votes of the people. *We* never chose Bohemian or Bavarian."

"But, on the contrary, whenever these Northmen come hither to be crowned, we try to drive them away with stones and curses,—for we are a people, Tribune, that love our liberties."

"Go back to your friends—see—address them, say that your Tribune will demand of these pretenders to Rome the right to her throne. Let them not be mazed or startled, but support me when the occasion comes."

"I am glad of this," quoth the huge smith; "for our friends have grown a little unruly of late, and say——"

"What do they say?"

"That it is true you have expelled the banditti, and curb the Barons, and administer justice fairly;——"

"Is not that miracle enough for the space of some two or three short months?"

"Why, they say it would have been more than enough in a noble; but you, being raised from the people, and having such gifts and so forth, might do yet more. It is now three weeks since they have had any new thing to talk about; but Orsini's execution to-day will cheer them a bit."

"Well, Cecco, well," said the Tribune, rising, "they shall have more anon to feed their mouths with. So you think they love me not quite so well as they did some three weeks back?"

"I say not so," answered Cecco. "But we Romans are an impatient people."

"Alas, yes!"

"However, they will no doubt stick close enough to you; provided, Tribune, you don't put any new tax upon them."

"Ha! But if, in order to be free, it be necessary to fight—if to fight, it be necessary to have soldiers, why then the soldiers must be paid:—won't the people contribute something to their own liberties;—to just laws, and safe lives?"

"I don't know," returned the smith, scratching his head as if a littled puzzled; "but I know that poor men won't be over-taxed. They say they are better off with you than with the Barons before, and therefore they love you. But men in business, Tribune, poor men with families, must look to their bellies. Only one man in ten goes to law—only one man in twenty is butchered

by a Baron's brigand ; but every man eats, and drinks, and feel a tax."

"This cannot be your reasoning, Cecco !" said Rienzi, gravely.

"Why, Tribune, I am an honest man, but I have a large family to rear."

"Enough ; enough !" said the Tribune quickly ; and then he added abstractedly as to himself, but aloud,—“Methinks we have been too lavish ; these shows and spectacles should cease.”

"What !" cried Cecco ; “what, Tribune !—would you deny the poor fellows a holiday. They work hard enough, and their only pleasure is seeing your fine shows and processions ; and then they go home and say,—‘See, *our* man beats all the Barons ! what state he keeps !’”

“Ah ! they blame not my splendour, then !”

“Blame it ? no ! Without it they would be ashamed of you, and think the *Buono Stato* but a shabby concern.”

“You speak bluntly, Cecco, but perhaps wisely. The saints keep you ! Fail not to remember what I told you !”

“No, no. It is a shame to have an Emperor thrust upon us ;—so it is. Good evening, Tribune.”

Left alone, the Tribune remained for some time plunged in gloomy and foreboding thoughts.

“I am in the midst of a magician's spell,” said he ; “if I desist, the fiends tear me to pieces. What I have begun, that must I conclude. But this rude man shows me too well with what tools I work. For *me*, failure is nothing. I have already climbed to a greatness which might render giddy many a born prince's brain. But with my fall—Rome, Italy, Peace, Justice, Civilisation—all fall back into the abyss of ages !”

He rose ; and after once or twice pacing his apartment, in which from many a column gleamed upon him the marble effigies of the great of old, he opened the casement to inhale the air of the now declining day.

The Place of the Capitol was deserted save by the tread of the single sentinel. But still, dark and fearful, hung from the tall gibbet the clay of the robber noble ; and the colossal shape of the Egyptian lion rose hard by, sharp and dark in the breathless atmosphere.

"Dread statue!" thought Rienzi, "how many unwhispered and solemn rites hast thou witnessed by thy native Nile, ere the Roman's hand transferred thee hither—the antique witness of Roman crimes! Strange! but when I look upon thee I feel as if thou hadst some mystic influence over my own fortunes. Beside thee was I hailed the republican Lord of Rome; beside thee are my palace, my tribunal, the place of my justice, my triumphs, and my pomp:—to thee my eyes turn from my bed of state: and if fated to die in power and peace, thou mayst be the last object my eyes will mark! Or if myself a victim——" —he paused—shrank from the thought presented to him—turned to a recess of the chamber—drew aside a curtain that veiled a crucifix and a small table, on which lay a Bible and the monastic emblems of the skull and cross-bones—emblems, indeed, grave and irresistible, of the nothingness of power, and the uncertainty of life. Before these sacred monitors, whether to humble or to elevate, knelt that proud and aspiring man; and when he rose, it was with a lighter step and more cheerful mien than he had worn that day.

CHAPTER III.

THE ACTOR UNMASKED.

"IN intoxication," says the proverb, "men betray their real characters." There is a no less honest and truth-revealing intoxication in prosperity, than in wine. The varnish of power brings forth at once the defects and the beauties of the human portrait.

The unprecedented and almost miraculous rise of Rienzi from the rank of the Pontiff's official to the Lord of Rome, would have been accompanied with a yet greater miracle, if it had not somewhat dazzled and seduced the object it elevated. When, as in well-ordered states and tranquil times, men rise slowly, step by step, they accustom themselves to their growing fortunes. But the leap of an hour from a citizen to a prince—from the victim of oppression to the dispenser of justice—is a transition so

sudden as to render dizzy the most sober brain. And, perhaps, in proportion to the imagination, the enthusiasm, the genius of the man, will the suddenness be dangerous—excite too extravagant a hope—and lead to too chimerical an ambition. The qualities that made him rise, hurry him to his fall; and victory at the Marengo of his fortunes, urges him to destruction at its Moscow.

In his greatness Rienzi did not so much acquire new qualities, as develop in brighter light and deeper shadow those which he had always exhibited. On the one hand he was just—resolute—the friend of the oppressed—the terror of the oppressor. His wonderful intellect illumined everything it touched. By rooting out abuse, and by searching examination and wise arrangement, he had trebled the revenues of the city without a single new tax. Faithful to his idol of liberty, he had not been betrayed by the wish of the people into despotic authority; but had, as we have seen, formally revived, and established with new powers, the Parliamentary Council of the city. However extensive his own authority, he referred its exercise to the people; in their name he alone declared himself to govern, and he never executed any signal action without submitting to them its reasons or its justification. No less faithful to his desire to restore prosperity as well as freedom to Rome, he had seized the first dazzling epoch of his power to propose that great federative league with the Italian States which would, as he rightly said, have raised Rome to the indisputable head of European nations. Under his rule trade was secure, literature was welcome, art began to rise.

On the other hand, the prosperity which made more apparent his justice, his integrity, his patriotism, his virtues, and his genius, brought out no less glaringly his arrogant consciousness of superiority, his love of display, and the wild and daring insolence of his ambition. Though too just to avenge himself by retaliating on the patricians their own violence, though, in his troubled and stormy tribuneship, not one unmerited or illegal execution of baron or citizen could be alleged against him, even by his enemies; yet sharing, less excusably, the weakness of Nina, he could not deny his proud heart the pleasure of humiliating those

who had ridiculed him as a buffoon, despised him as a plebeian, and who, even now slaves to his face, were cynics behind his back. "They stood before him while he sate," says his biographer :—"all these Barons, bareheaded ; their hands crossed on their breasts ; their looks downcast ;—oh, how frightened they were !"—a picture more disgraceful to the servile cowardice of the nobles than the haughty sternness of the Tribune. It might be that he deemed it policy to break the spirit of his foes, and to awe those whom it was a vain hope to conciliate.

For his pomp there was a greater excuse : it was the custom of the time ; it was the insignia and witness of power ; and when the modern historian taunts him with not imitating the simplicity of an ancient Tribune, the sneer betrays an ignorance of the spirit of the age, and the vain people whom the chief magistrate was to govern. No doubt his gorgeous festivals, his solemn processions, set off and ennobled—if parade can so be ennobled—by a refined and magnificent richness of imagination, associated always with popular emblems, and designed to convey the idea of rejoicing for Liberty Restored, and to assert the state and majesty of Rome Revived—no doubt these spectacles, however otherwise judged in a more enlightened age and by closet sages, served greatly to augment the importance of the Tribune abroad, and to dazzle the pride of a fickle and ostentatious populace. And taste grew refined, luxury called labour into requisition, and foreigners from all states were attracted by the splendour of a court over which presided, under republican names, two sovereigns,¹ young and brilliant, the one renowned for his genius, the other eminent for her beauty. It was, indeed, a dazzling and royal dream in the long night of Rome, spoiled of her Pontiff and his voluptuous train—that holyday reign of Cola di Rienzi ! And often afterwards it was recalled with a

¹ Rienzi, speaking in one of his letters of his great enterprise, refers it to the ardour of youth. The exact date of his birth is unknown ; but he was certainly a young man at the time now referred to. His portrait in the Museo Barberino, from which his description has been already taken in the first book of this work, represents him as beardless, and, as far as one can judge, somewhere above thirty—old enough, to be sure, to have a beard ; and seven years afterwards he wore a long one, which greatly displeased his naïve biographer, who seems to consider it a sort of crime. The head is very remarkable for its stern beauty, and little, if at all, inferior to that of Napoleon ; to which, as I before remarked, it has some resemblance in expression, if not in feature.

sigh, not only by the poor for its justice, the merchant* for its security, but the gallant for its splendour, and the poet for its ideal and intellectual grace!

As if to show that it was not to gratify the more vulgar appetite and desire, in the midst of all his pomp, when the board groaned with the delicacies of every clime, when the wine most freely circled, the Tribune himself preserved a temperate and even rigid abstinence.¹ While the apartments of state and the chamber of his bride were adorned with a profuse luxury and cost, to his own private rooms he transported precisely the same furniture which had been familiar to him in his obscurer life. The books, the busts, the reliefs, the arms which had inspired him heretofore with the visions of the past, were endeared by associations which he did not care to forego.

But that which constituted the most singular feature of his character, and which still wraps all around him in a certain mystery, was his religious enthusiasm. The daring but wild doctrines of Arnold of Brescia, who, two centuries anterior, had preached reform, but inculcated mysticism, still lingered in Rome, and had in earlier youth deeply coloured the mind of Rienzi; and as I have before observed, his youthful propensity to dreamy thought, the melancholy death of his brother, his own various but successful fortunes, had all contributed to nurse the more zealous and solemn aspirations of this remarkable man. Like Arnold of Brescia, his faith bore a strong resemblance to the intense fanaticism of our own Puritans of the Civil War, as if similar political circumstances conduced to similar religious sentiments. He believed himself inspired by awful and mighty commune with beings of the better world. Saints and angels ministered to his dreams; and without this, the more profound and hallowed enthusiasm, he might never have been sufficiently emboldened by mere human patriotism to his unprecedented enterprise: it was the secret of much of his greatness,—many of his errors. Like all men who are thus self-deluded by a vain but not inglorious superstition, united with, and coloured by, earthly ambition, it is impossible to say how far he was the visionary, and how far at times he dared to be

¹ *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*.—The biographer praises the abstinence of the *Tribune*.

the impostor. In the ceremonies of his pageants, in the ornaments of his person, were invariably introduced mystic and figurative emblems. In times of danger he publicly professed to have been cheered and directed by divine dreams ; and on many occasions the prophetic warnings he announced having been singularly verified by the event, his influence with the people was strengthened by a belief in the favour and intercourse of Heaven. Thus, delusion of self might tempt and conduce to imposition on others, and he might not scruple to avail himself of the advantage of seeming what he believed himself to be. Yet, no doubt this intoxicating credulity pushed him into extravagance unworthy of, and strangely contrasted by, his soberer intellect, and made him disproportion his vast ends to his unsteady means, by the proud fallacy, that where man failed, God would interpose. Cola di Rienzi was no faultless hero of romance. In him lay, in conflicting prodigality, the richest and most opposite elements of character ; strong sense, visionary superstition, an eloquence and energy that mastered all he approached, a blind enthusiasm that mastered himself ; luxury and abstinence, sternness and susceptibility, pride to the great, humility to the low ; the most devoted patriotism and the most avid desire of personal power. As few men undertake great and desperate designs without strong animal spirits, so it may be observed, that with most who have risen to eminence over the herd, there is an aptness, at times, to a wild mirth and an elasticity of humour which often astonish the more sober and regulated minds, that are "the commoners of life:" and the theatrical grandeur of Napoleon, the severe dignity of Cromwell, are strangely contrasted by a frequent, nor always seasonable buffoonery, which it is hard to reconcile with the ideal of their characters, or the gloomy and portentous interest of their careers. And this, equally a trait in the temperament of Rienzi, distinguished his hours of relaxation, and contributed to that marvellous versatility with which his harder nature accommodated itself to all humours and all men. Often from his austere judgment-seat he passed to the social board an altered man ; and even the sullen Barons who reluctantly attended his feasts, forgot his public greatness in his familiar wit ; albeit this

reckless humour could not always refrain from seeking its subject in the mortification of his crest-fallen foes—a pleasure it would have been wiser and more generous to forego. And perhaps it was, in part, the prompting of this sarcastic and unbridled humour that made him often love to astonish as well as to awe. But even this gaiety, if so it may be called, taking an appearance of familiar frankness, served much to ingratiate him with the lower orders; and, if a fault in the prince, was a virtue in the demagogue.

To these various characteristics, now fully developed, the reader must add a genius of designs so bold, of conceptions so gigantic and august, conjoined with that more minute and ordinary ability which masters details; that with a brave, noble, intelligent, devoted people to back his projects, the accession of the Tribune would have been the close of the thralldom of Italy, and the abrupt limit of the dark age of Europe. With such a people, his faults would have been insensibly checked, his more unwholesome power have received a sufficient curb. Experience familiarizing him with power, would have gradually weaned him from extravagance in its display; and the active and masculine energy of his intellect would have found field for the more restless spirits, as his justice gave shelter to the more tranquil. Faults he had, but whether those faults, or the faults of the people, were to prepare his downfall, is yet to be seen.

Meanwhile, amidst a discontented nobility and a fickle populace, urged on by the danger of repose to the danger of enterprise; partly blinded by his outward power, partly impelled by the fear of internal weakness; at once made sanguine by his genius and his fanaticism, and uneasy by the expectations of the crowd,—he threw himself headlong into the gulf of the rushing Time, and surrendered his lofty spirit to no other guidance than a conviction of its natural buoyancy and its heaven-directed haven.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

WHILE Rienzi was preparing, in concert, perhaps, with the ambassadors of the brave Tuscan States, whose pride of country and love of liberty were well fitted to comprehend, and even share them, his schemes for the emancipation from all foreign yoke of the Ancient Queen, and the Everlasting Garden of the World; the Barons, in restless secrecy, were revolving projects for the restoration of their own power.

One morning, the heads of the Savelli, the Orsini, and the Frangipani, met at the disfortified palace of Stephen Colonna. Their conference was warm and earnest—now resolute, now wavering, in its object—as indignation or fear prevailed.

“You have heard,” said Luca di Savelli, in his usual soft and womanly voice, “that the Tribune has proclaimed, that, the day after to-morrow, he will take the order of knighthood, and watch the night before in the church of the Lateran! He has honoured me with a request to attend his vigil.”

“Yes, yes, the knave. What means this new fantasy?” said the brutal Prince of the Orsini.

“Unless it be to have the cavalier’s right to challenge a noble,” said old Colonna, “I cannot conjecture. Will Rome never grow weary of this madman?”

“Rome is the more mad of the two,” said Luca di Savelli; “but methinks, in his wildness, the Tribune hath committed one error of which we may well avail ourselves at Avignon.”

“Ah,” cried the old Colonna, “that must be our game; passive here, let us fight at Avignon.”

“In a word then, he hath ordered that his bath shall be prepared in the holy porphyry vase in which once bathed the Emperor Constantine.”

“Profanation! profanation!” cried Stephen. “This is enough to excuse a bull of excommunication. The Pope shall hear of it. I will despatch a courier forthwith.”

"Better wait and see the ceremony," said the Savelli; "some greater folly will close the pomp, be assured."

"Hark ye, my masters," said the grim Lord of the Orsini; "ye are for delay and caution, I for promptness and daring; my kinsman's blood calls aloud, and brooks no parley."

"And what do?" said the soft-voiced Savelli; "fight without soldiers, against twenty thousand infuriated Romans? not I."

Orsini sunk his voice into a meaning whisper. "In Venice," said he, "this upstart might be mastered without an army. Think you in Rome no man wears a stiletto?"

"Hush," said Stephen, who was of far nobler and better nature than his compeers, and who, justifying to himself all other resistance to the Tribune, felt his conscience rise against assassination; "this must not be—your zeal transports you."

"Besides, whom can we employ? scarce a German left in the city; and to whisper this to a Roman were to exchange places with poor Martino—Heaven take him, for he's nearer Heaven than ever he was before," said the Savelli.

"Jest me no jests!" cried the Orsini, fiercely. "Jests on such a subject! By St. Francis I would, since thou lovest such wit, thou hadst it all to thyself; and, methinks, at the Tribune's board I have seen thee laugh at his rude humour as if thou didst not require a cord to choke thee."

"Better to laugh than to tremble," returned the Savelli.

"How! darest thou say I tremble?" cried the Baron.

"Hush, hush," said the veteran Colonna, with impatient dignity. "We are not now in such holiday times as to quarrel amongst ourselves. Forbear, my lords."

"Your greater prudence, Signor," said the sarcastic Savelli, "arises from your greater safety. Your house is about to shelter itself under the Tribune's; and, when the Lord Adrian returns from Naples, the innkeeper's son will be brother to your kinsman."

"You might spare me that taunt," said the old noble, with some emotion. "Heaven knows how bitterly I have chafed at the thought; yet I would Adrian were with us. His word goes far to moderate the Tribune, and to guide my own course, for my passion beguiles my reason; and since his departure methinks

we have been the more sullen without being the more strong. Let this pass. If my own son had wed the Tribune's sister, I would yet strike a blow for the old constitution as becomes a noble, if I but saw that the blow would not cut off my own head."

Savelli, who had been whispering apart with Rinaldo Frangipani, now said—

"Noble Prince, listen to me. You are bound by your kinsman's approaching connection, your venerable age, and your intimacy with the Pontiff, to a greater caution than we are. Leave to us the management of the enterprise, and be assured of our discretion."

A young boy, Stefanello, who afterwards succeeded to the representation of the direct line of the Colonna, and whom the reader will once again encounter ere our tale be closed, was playing by his grandsire's knees. He looked sharply up at Savelli, and said, "My grandfather is too wise, and you are too timid. Frangipani is too yielding, and Orsini is too like a vexed bull. I wish I were a year or two older."

"And what would you do, my pretty censurer?" said the smooth Savelli, biting his smiling lip.

"Stab the Tribune with my own stiletto, and then hey for Palestrina!"

"The egg will hatch a brave serpent," quoth the Savelli. "Yet why so bitter against the Tribune, my cockatrice?"

"Because he allowed an insolent mercer to arrest my uncle Agapet for debt. The debt had been owed these ten years; and though it is said that no house in Rome has owed more money than the Colonna, this is the first time I ever heard of a rascally creditor being allowed to claim his debt unless with doffed cap and bended knee. And I say that I would not live to be a Baron, if such upstart insolence is to be put upon me."

"My child," said old Stephen, laughing heartily, "I see our noble order will be safe enough in your hands."

"And," continued the child, emboldened by the applause he received, "if I had time, after pricking the Tribune, I would fain have a second stroke at——"

"Whom?" said the Savelli, observing the boy pause.

"My cousin Adrian. Shame on him, for dreaming to make one a wife whose birth would scarce fit her for a Colonna's leman!"

"Go play, my child—go play," said the old Colonna, as he pushed the boy from him.

"Enough of this babble," cried the Orsini, rudely. "Tell me, old lord; just as I entered, I saw an old friend (one of your former mercenaries) quit the palace—may I crave his errand?"

"Ah, yes; a messenger from Fra Moreale. I wrote to the Knight, reproving him for his desertion on our ill-starred return from Corneto, and intimating that five hundred lances would be highly paid for just now."

"Ah," said Savelli; "and what is his answer?"

"Oh, wily and evasive: He is profuse in compliments and good wishes; but says he is under fealty to the Hungarian king, whose cause is before Rienzi's tribunal; that he cannot desert his present standard; that he fears Rome is so evenly balanced between patricians and the people, that whatever party would permanently be uppermost must call in a Podesta; and this character alone the Provençal insinuates would suit him."

"Montreal our Podesta?" cried the Orsini.

"And why not?" said Savelli; "as good a well-born Podesta as a low-born Tribune! But I trust we may do without either. Colonna, has this messenger from Fra Moreale left the city?"

"I suppose so."

"No," said Orsini; "I met him at the gate, and knew him of old: it is Rodolf, the Saxon (once a hireling of the Colonna), who has made some widows among my clients in the good old day. He is a little disguised now; however, I recognised and accosted him, for I thought he was one who might yet become a friend, and I bade him await me at my palace."

"You did well," said the Savelli, musing, and his eyes met those of Orsini. Shortly afterwards a conference, in which much was said and nothing settled, was broken up; but Luca di Savelli, loitering at the porch, prayed the Frangipani, and the other Barons, to adjourn to the Orsini's palace

"The old Colonna," said he, "is well-nigh in his dotage. We shall come to a quick determination without him, and we can secure his proxy in his son."

And this was a true prophecy, for half-an-hour's consultation with Rodolf of Saxony sufficed to ripen thought into enterprise.

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT AND ITS INCIDENTS.

WITH the following twilight, Rome was summoned to the commencement of the most magnificent spectacle the Imperial City had witnessed since the fall of the Cæsars. It had been a singular privilege, arrogated by the people of Rome, to confer upon their citizens the order of knighthood. Twenty years before, a Colonna and an Orsini had received this popular honour. Rienzi, who designed it as the prelude to a more important ceremony, claimed from the Romans a similar distinction. From the Capitol in the Lateran swept, in long procession, all that Rome boasted of noble, of fair, and brave. First went horsemen without number, and from all the neighbouring parts of Italy, in apparel that well befitted the occasion. Trumpeters, and musicians of all kinds, followed, and the trumpets were of silver; youths bearing the harness of the knightly war-steed, wrought with gold, preceded the march of the loftiest matronage of Rome, whose love for show, and it may be whose admiration for triumphant fame (which to women sanctions many offences), made them forget the humbled greatness of their lords; amidst them Nina and Irene, outshining all the rest; then came the Tribune and the Pontiff's Vicar, surrounded by all the great Signors of the city, smothering alike resentment, revenge, and scorn, and struggling who should approach nearest to the monarch of the day. The high-hearted old Colonna alone remained aloof, following at a little distance, and in a garb studiously plain. But his age, his rank, his former renown in war and state, did not suffice to draw to his

grey locks and high-born mien a single one of the shouts that attended the meanest lord on whom the great Tribune smiled. Savelli followed nearest to Rienzi, the most obsequious of the courtly band; immediately before the tribune came two men; the one bore a drawn sword, the other the *pendone*, or standard usually assigned to royalty. The Tribune himself was clothed in a long robe of white satin, whose snowy dazzle (*miri candoris*) is peculiarly dwelt on by the historian, richly decorated with gold; while on his breast were many of those mystic symbols I have before alluded to, the exact meaning of which was perhaps known only to the wearer. In his dark eye, and on that large tranquil brow, in which thought seemed to sleep, as sleeps a storm, there might be detected a mind abstracted from the pomp around; but ever and anon he aroused himself, and conversed partially with Raimond or Savelli.

"This is a quaint game," said the Orsini, falling back to the old Colonna: "but it may end tragically."

"Methinks it may," said the old man, "if the Tribune overhear thee."

Orsini grew pale. "How—nay—nay, even if he did, he never resents words, but professes to laugh at our spoken rage. It was but the other day that some knave told him what one of the Annibaldi said of him—words for which a true cavalier would have drawn the speaker's life's blood; and he sent for the Annibaldi, and said, 'My friend, receive this purse of gold—court wit should be paid.'"

"Did Annibaldi take the gold?"

"Why, no; the Tribune was pleased with the spirit, and made him sup with him; and Annibaldi says he never spent a merrier evening, and no longer wonders that his kinsman, Ricardo, loves the buffoon so."

Arrived now at the Lateran, Luca di Savelli fell also back, and whispered to Orsini; the Frangipani, and some others of the nobles, exchanged meaning looks; Rienzi, entering the sacred edifice in which, according to custom, he was to pass the night watching his armour, bade the crowd farewell, and summoned them the next morning. "To hear things that might, he trusted, be acceptable to heaven and earth."

The immense multitude received this intimation with curiosity and gladness, while those who had been in some measure prepared by Cecco del Vecchio, hailed it as an omen of their Tribune's unflagging resolution. The concourse dispersed with singular order and quietness; it was recorded as a remarkable fact, that in so great a crowd, composed of men of all parties, none exhibited licence or indulged in quarrel. Some of the barons and cavaliers, among whom was Luca di Savelli, whose sleek urbanity and sarcastic humour found favour with the Tribune, and a few subordinate pages and attendants, alone remained; and, save a single sentinel at the porch, that broad space before the Palace, the Basilica and Fount of Constantine, soon presented a silent and desolate void to the melancholy moonlight. Within the church, according to the usage of the time and rite, the descendant of the Teuton kings received the order of the Santo Spirito. His pride or some superstition equally weak, though more excusable, led him to bathe in the porphyry vase which an absurd legend consecrated to Constantine; and this, as Savelli predicted, cost him dear. These appointed ceremonies concluded, his arms were placed in the part of the church within the columns of St. John. And here his state bed was prepared.¹

The attendant barons, pages and chamberlains, retired out of sight to a small side chapel in the edifice; and Rienzi was left alone. A single lamp, placed beside his bed, contended with the mournful rays of the moon, that cast through the long casements, over aisle and pillar, its "dim religious light." The sanctity of the place, the solemnity of the hour, and the solitary silence round, were well calculated to deepen the high-wrought and earnest mood of that son of fortune. Many and high fancies swept over his mind—now of worldly aspirations, now of more august but visionary belief, till at length, wearied with his own reflections, he cast himself on the bed. It was an omen which graver history has not neglected to record, that the moment he pressed the bed, new prepared for the occasion,

¹ In a more northern country, the eve of knighthood would have been spent without sleeping. In Italy, the ceremony of watching the armour does not appear to have been so rigidly observed.

part of it sank under him. He himself was affected by the accident, and sprung forth, turning pale and muttering; but, as if ashamed of his weakness, after a moment's pause, again composed himself to rest, and drew the drapery round him.

The moonbeams grew fainter and more faint as the time proceeded, and the sharp distinction between light and shade faded fast from the marble floor; when from behind a column at the furthest verge of the building, a strange shadow suddenly crossed the sickly light—it crept on—it moved, but without an echo,—from pillar to pillar it flitted—it rested at last behind the column nearest to the Tribune's bed—it remained stationary.

The shades gathered darker and darker round; the stillness seemed to deepen; the moon was gone; and, save from the struggling ray of the lamp beside Rienzi, the blackness of night closed over the solemn and ghostly scene.

In one of the side chapels, as I have before said, which, in the many alterations the church has undergone, is probably long since destroyed, were Savelli and the few attendants retained by the Tribune. Savelli alone slept not; he remained sitting erect, breathless and listening, while the tall lights in the chapel rendered yet more impressive the rapid changes of his countenance.

"Now pray Heaven," said he, "the knave miscarry not! Such an occasion may never again occur! He has a strong arm and a dexterous hand, doubtless; but the other is a powerful man. The deed once done, I care not whether the doer escape or not; if not, why we must stab him! Dead men tell no tales. At the worst, who can avenge Rienzi? There is no other Rienzi! Ourselves and the Frangipani seize the Aventine, the Colonna and the Orsini the other quarters of the city; and without the master-spirit, we may laugh at the mad populace. But if discovered——;" and Savelli, who, fortunately for his foes, had not nerves equal to his will, covered his face and shuddered;—"I think I hear a noise!—no—is it the wind?—tush, it must be old Vico de Scotto, turning in his shell of mail!—silent—I like not that silence! No cry—no sound! Can the ruffian have played us false? or could he not scale the

casement? It is but a child's effort;—or did the sentry spy him?"

Time passed on: the first ray of daylight slowly gleamed, when he thought he heard the door of the church close. Savelli's suspense became intolerable: he stole from the chapel, and came in sight of the Tribune's bed—all was silent.

"Perhaps the silence of death," said Savelli, as he crept back.

Meanwhile the Tribune, vainly endeavouring to close his eyes, was rendered yet more watchful by the uneasy position he was obliged to assume—for the part of the bed towards the pillow having given way, while the rest remained solid, he had inverted the legitimate order of lying, and drawn himself up as he might best accommodate his limbs, towards the foot of the bed. The light of the lamp, though shaded by the draperies, was thus opposite to him. Impatient of his wakefulness, he at last thought it was this dull and flickering light which scared away the slumber, and was about to rise to remove it further from him, when he saw the curtain at the other end of the bed gently lifted: he remained quiet and alarmed;—ere he could draw a second breath, a dark figure interposed between the light and the bed; and he felt that a stroke was aimed against that part of the couch, which but for the accident that had seemed to him ominous, would have given his breast to the knife. Rienzi waited not a second and better-directed blow; as the assassin yet stooped, groping in the uncertain light, he threw on him all the weight and power of his large and muscular frame, wrenched the stiletto from the bravo's hand, and dashing him on the bed, placed his knee on his breast.—The stiletto rose—gleamed—descended—the murderer swerved aside, and it pierced only his right arm. The Tribune raised, for a deadlier blow, the revengeful blade.

The assassin thus foiled was a man used to all form and shape of danger, and he did not now lose his presence of mind.

"Hold!" said he; "if you kill me, you will die yourself. Spare me, and I will save *you*."

"Miscreant!"

"Hush—not so loud, or you will disturb your attendants, and some of them may do what I have failed to execute. Spare me, I say, and I will reveal that which were worth more than my life; but call not—speak not aloud, I warn you!"

The Tribune felt his heart stand still: in that lonely place, afar from his idolizing people—his devoted guards—with but loathing barons, or, it might be, faithless menials, within call, might not the baffled murderer give a wholesome warning?—and those words and that doubt seemed suddenly to reverse their respective positions, and leave the conqueror still in the assassin's power.

"Thou thinkest to deceive me," said he, but in a voice whispered and uncertain, which showed the ruffian the advantage he had gained: "thou wouldst that I might release thee without summoning my attendants, that thou mightst a second time attempt my life."

"Thou hast disabled my right arm, and disarmed me of my only weapon."

"How camest thou hither?"

"By connivance."

"Whence this attempt?"

"The dictation of others."

"If I pardon thee——"

"Thou shalt know all."

"Rise," said the Tribune, releasing his prisoner, but with great caution, and still grasping his shoulder with one hand, while the other pointed the dagger at his throat. "Did my sentry admit thee? There is but one entrance to the church, methinks."

"He did not; follow me, and I will tell thee more."

"Dog! thou hast accomplices!"

"If I have, thou hast the knife at my throat."

"Wouldst thou escape?"

"I cannot, or I would."

Rienzi looked hard, by the dull light of the lamp, at the assassin. His rugged and coarse countenance, rude garb, and barbarian speech, seemed to him proof sufficient that he was but the hireling of others; and it might be wise to brave one

danger present and certain, to prevent much danger future and unforeseen. Rienzi, too, was armed, strong, active, in the prime of life;—and at the worst, there was no part of the building whence his voice would not reach those within the chapel,—if they could be depended upon.

“Show me then thy place and means of entrance,” said he; “and if I but suspect thee as we move—thou diest. Take up the lamp.”

The ruffian nodded; with his left hand took up the lamp as he was ordered; and with Rienzi’s grasp on his shoulder, while the wound from his right arm dropped gore as he passed, he moved noiselessly along the church—gained the altar—to the left of which was a small room for the use or retirement of the priest. To this he made his way. Rienzi’s heart misgave him a moment.

“Beware,” he whispered, “the least sign of fraud, and thou art the first victim!”

The assassin nodded again, and proceeded. They entered the room; and then the Tribune’s strange guide pointed to an open casement. “Behold my entrance,” said he; “and, if you permit me, my egress——”

“The frog gets not out of the well so easily as he came in, friend,” returned Rienzi, smiling. “And now, if I am not to call my guards, what am I to do with thee?”

“Let me go, and I will seek thee to-morrow; and if thou payest me handsomely, and promisest not to harm limb or life, I will put thine enemies and my employers in thy power.”

Rienzi could not refrain from a slight laugh at the proposition, but composing himself, replied—“And what if I call my attendants, and give thee to their charge?”

“Thou givest me to those very enemies and employers; and in despair lest I betray them, ere the day dawn they cut my throat—or thine.”

“Methinks, knave, I have seen thee before.”

“Thou hast. I blush not for name or country. I am Rodolf of Saxony!”

“I remember me:—servitor of Walter de Montreal. He, then, is thy instigator?”

"Roman, no! That noble Knight scorns other weapon than the open sword, and his own hand slays his own foes. Your pitiful, miserable, dastard Italians, alone employ the courage, and hire the arm of others."

Rienzi remained silent. He had released hold of his prisoner, and stood facing him; every now and then regarding his countenance, and again relapsing into thought. At length, casting his eyes round the small chamber thus singularly tenanted, he observed a kind of closet, in which the priests' robes, and some articles used in the sacred service, were contained. It suggested at once an escape from his dilemma: he pointed to it—

"There, Rodolf of Saxony, shalt thou pass some part of this night—a small penance for thy meditated crime; and to-morrow, as thou lookest for life, thou wilt reveal all."

"Hark ye, Tribune," returned the Saxon, doggedly; "my liberty is in your power, but neither my tongue nor my life. If I consent to be caged in that hole, you must swear on the crossed hilt of the dagger that you now hold, that, on confession of all I know, you pardon and set me free. My employers are enough to glut your rage an' you were a tiger. If you do not swear this——"

"Ah, my modest friend!—the alternative?"

"I brain myself against the stone wall! Better such a death than the rack!"

"Fool, I want not revenge against such as thou. Be honest, and I swear that, twelve hours after thy confession, thou shalt stand safe and unscathed without the walls of Rome. So help me our Lord and his saints."

"I am content!—*Donner und Hagel*, I have lived long enough to care only for my own life, and the great captain's next to it;—for the rest, I reckon not if ye southerners cut each other's throats, and make all Italy one grave."

With this benevolent speech, Rodolf entered the closet; but ere Rienzi could close the door, he stepped forth again—

"Hold," said he: "this blood flows fast. Help me to bandage it, or I shall bleed to death ere my confession."

"*Per fede*," said the Tribune, his strange humour enjoying the

man's cool audacity ; "but, considering the service thou wouldst have rendered me, thou art the most pleasant, forbearing, unabashed, good fellow, I have seen this many a year. Give us thine own belt. I little thought my first eve of knighthood would have been so charitably spent !"

"Methinks these robes would make a better bandage," said Rodolf, pointing to the priests' gear suspended from the wall.

"Silence, knave," said the Tribune, frowning ; "no sacrilege ! Yet, as thou takest such dainty care of thyself, thou shalt have mine own scarf to accommodate thee."

With that the Tribune, placing his dagger on the ground, while he cautiously guarded it with his foot, bound up the wounded limb, for which condescension Rodolf gave him short thanks ; resumed his weapon and lamp ; closed the door ; drew over it the long, heavy bolt without, and returned to his couch, deeply and indignantly musing over the treason he had so fortunately escaped.

At the first grey streak of dawn he went out of the great door of the church, called the sentry, who was one of his own guard, and bade him privately, and now ere the world was astir, convey the prisoner to one of the private dungeons of the Capitol. "Be silent," said he : "utter not a word of this to any one ; be obedient, and thou shalt be promoted. This done, find out the councillor, Pandulfo di Guido, and bid him seek me here ere the crowd assemble."

He then, making the sentinel doff his heavy shoes of iron, led him across the church, resigned Rodolf to his care, saw them depart, and in a few minutes afterwards his voice was heard by the inmates of the neighbouring chapel ; and he was soon surrounded by his train.

He was already standing on the floor, wrapped in a large gown lined with furs ; and his piercing eye scanned carefully the face of each man that approached. Two of the Barons of the Frangipani family exhibited some tokens of confusion and embarrassment, from which they speedily recovered at the frank salutation of the Tribune.

But all the art of Savelli could not prevent his features from betraying to the most indifferent eye the terror of his soul ;—

and when he felt the penetrating gaze of Rienzi upon him, he trembled in every joint. Rienzi alone did not, however, seem to notice his disorder; and when Vico di Scotto, an old knight, from whose hands he received his sword, asked him how he had passed the night, he replied, cheerfully—

“Well, well—my brave friend! Over a maiden knight some good angel always watches. Signor Luca di Savelli, I fear you have slept but ill: you seem pale. No matter!—our banquet to-day will soon brighten the current of your gay blood.”

“Blood, Tribune!” said di Scotto, who was innocent of the plot: “thou sayest blood, and lo! on the floor are large goutts of it not yet dry.”

“Now, out on thee, old hero, for betraying my awkwardness! I pricked myself with my own dagger in unrobing. Thank Heaven it hath no poison in its blade!”

The Frangipani exchanged looks,—Luca di Savelli clung to a column for support,—and the rest of the attendants seemed grave and surprised.

“Think not of it, my masters,” said Rienzi: “it is a good omen, and a true prophecy. It implies that he who girds on his sword for the good of the state, must be ready to spill his blood for it: that am I. No more of this—a mere scratch: it gave more blood than I recked of from so slight a puncture, and saves the leech the trouble of the lancet. How brightly breaks the day! We must prepare to meet our fellow-citizens—they will be here anon. Ha, my Pandulfo—welcome!—thou, my old friend, shalt buckle on this mantle!”

And while Pandulfo was engaged in the task, the Tribune whispered a few words in his ear, which, by the smile on his countenance, seemed to the attendants one of the familiar jests with which Rienzi distinguished his intercourse with his more confidential intimates.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CELEBRATED CITATION.

THE bell of the great Lateran church sounded shrill and loud, as the mighty multitude, greater even than that of the preceding night, swept on. The appointed officers made way with difficulty for the barons and ambassadors, and scarcely were those noble visitors admitted ere the crowd closed in their ranks, poured headlong into the church, and took the way to the chapel of Boniface VIII. There, filling every cranny, and blocking up the entrance, the more fortunate of the press beheld the Tribune surrounded by the splendid court his genius had collected, and his fortune had subdued. At length, as the solemn and holy music began to swell through the edifice, prelude to the celebration of the mass, the Tribune stepped forth, and the hush of the music was increased by the universal and dead silence of the audience. His height, his air, his countenance, were such as always command the attention of crowds; and at this time they received every adjunct from the interest of the occasion, and that peculiar look of intent yet suppressed fervour, which is, perhaps, the sole gift of the eloquent that Nature alone can give.

"Be it known," said he, slowly and deliberately, "in virtue of that authority, power, and jurisdiction, which the Roman people, in general parliament, have assigned to us, and which the Sovereign Pontiff hath confirmed, that we, not ungrateful of the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit—whose soldier we now are—nor of the favour of the Roman people, declare, that Rome, capital of the world, and base of the Christian Church; and that every City, State, and People of Italy, are henceforth free. By that freedom, and in the same consecrated authority, we proclaim, that the election, jurisdiction, and monarchy of the Roman empire appertain to Rome and Rome's people, and the whole of Italy. We cite, then, and summon personally, the illustrious princes, Louis Duke of Bavaria, and Charles King of

Bohemia, who would style themselves Emperors of Italy, to appear before us, or the other magistrates of Rome, to plead and to prove their claim between this day and the Day of Pentecost. We cite also, and within the same term, the Duke of Saxony, the Prince of Brandenburg, and whosoever else, potentate, prince, or prelate, asserts the right of Elector to the imperial throne—a right that, we find it chronicled from ancient and immemorial time, appertaineth only to the Roman people—and this in vindication of our civil liberties, without derogation of the spiritual power of the Church, the Pontiff, and the Sacred College.¹ Herald, proclaim the citation, at the greater and more formal length, as written and intrusted to your hands, without the Lateran.”

As Rienzi concluded this bold proclamation of the liberties of Italy, the Tuscan ambassadors, and those of some other of the free states, murmured low approbation. The ambassadors of those States that affected the party of the Emperor looked at each other in silent amaze and consternation. The Roman Barons remained with mute lips and downcast eyes ; only over the aged face of Stephen Colonna settled a smile, half of scorn,

¹ “ Il tutto senza derogare all’ autorità della Chiesa, del Papa e del Sacro Collegio.” So concludes this extraordinary citation, this bold and wonderful assertion of the classic independence of Italy, in the most feudal time of the fourteenth century. The anonymous biographer of Rienzi declares that the Tribune cited also the Pope and the Cardinals to reside in Rome. De Sade powerfully and incontrovertibly refutes this addition to the daring or the extravagance of Rienzi. Gibbon, however, who has rendered the rest of the citation in terms more abrupt and discourteous than he was warranted by any authority, copies the biographer’s blunder, and sneers at De Sade, as using arguments “rather of decency than of weight.” Without wearying the reader with all the arguments of the learned Abbé, it may be sufficient to give the first two.

1. All the other contemporaneous historians that have treated of this event, G. Villani, Hocsemius, the Vatican MSS. and other chroniclers, relating the citation of the Emperor and Electors, say nothing of that of the Pope and Cardinals ; and the Pope (Clement VI.), in his subsequent accusations of Rienzi, while very bitter against his citation of the Emperor, is wholly silent on what would have been to the Pontiff the much greater offence of citing himself and the Cardinals.

2. The literal act of this citation, as published formally in the Lateran, is extant in Hocsemius (whence is borrowed, though not at all its length, the speech in the text of our present tale) ; and in this document the Pope and his Cardinals are *not* named in the summons.

Gibbon’s whole account of Rienzi is superficial and unfair. To the cold and sneering scepticism, which so often deforms the gigantic work of that great writer, allowing nothing for that sincere and urgent enthusiasm which, whether of liberty or religion, is the most common parent of daring action, the great Roman seems but an ambitious and fantastic madman. In Gibbon’s hands what would Cromwell have been ? what Vane ? what Hampden ? The pedant, Julian, with his dirty person and pompous affectation, was Gibbon’s ideal of a great man.

half of exultation. But the great mass of the citizens were caught by words that opened so grand a prospect as the emancipation of all Italy: and their reverence of the Tribune's power and fortune was almost that due to a supernatural being; so that they did not pause to calculate the means which were to correspond with the boast.

While his eye roved over the crowd, the gorgeous assemblage near him, the devoted throng beyond;—as on his ear boomed the murmur of thousands and ten thousands, in the space without, from before the Palace of Constantine (Palace now his own!) sworn to devote life and fortune to his cause;—in the flush of prosperity that yet had known no check; in the zenith of power, as yet unconscious of reverse, the heart of the Tribune swelled proudly: visions of mighty fame and limitless dominion,—fame and dominion, once his beloved Rome's and by him to be restored, rushed before his intoxicated gaze; and in the delirious and passionate aspirations of the moment, he turned his sword alternately to the three quarters of the then known globe, and said, in an abstracted voice, as a man in a dream, “In the right of the Roman people *this* too is mine!”¹

Low though the voice, the wild boast was heard by all around as distinctly as if borne to them in thunder. And vain it were to describe the various sensations it excited; the extravagance would have moved the derision of his foes, the grief of his friends, but for the manner of the speaker, which, solemn and commanding, hushed for the moment even reason and hatred themselves in awe; afterwards remembered and repeated, void of the spell they had borrowed from the utterer, the words met the cold condemnation of the well-judging; but at that moment all things seemed possible to the hero of the people. He spoke as one inspired—they trembled and believed; and, as rapt from the spectacle, he stood a moment silent, his arm still extended—his dark dilating eye fixed upon space—his lip parted—his proud head towering and erect above the herd,—his own enthusiasm kindled that of the more humble and distant spectators; and there was a deep murmur begun by one, echoed by the rest, “The Lord is with Italy and Rienzi!”

¹ “Questo e mio.”

The Tribune turned, he saw the Pope's Vicar astonished, bewildered, rising to speak. His sense and foresight returned to him at once, and, resolved to drown the dangerous disavowal of the Papal authority for this hardihood, which was ready to burst from Raimond's lips, he motioned quickly to the musicians, and the solemn and ringing chant of the sacred ceremony prevented the Bishop of Orvietto all occasion of self-exoneration or reply.

The moment the ceremony was over, Rienzi touched the Bishop, and whispered, "We will explain this to your liking. You feast with us at the Lateran.—Your arm." Nor did he leave the good Bishop's arm, nor trust him to other companionship, until to the stormy sound of horn and trumpet, drum and cymbal, and amidst such a concourse as might have hailed, on the same spot, the legendary baptism of Constantine, the Tribune and his nobles entered the great gates of the Lateran, then the Palace of the World.

Thus ended that remarkable ceremony and that proud challenge of the Northern Powers, in behalf of the Italian liberties, which, had it been afterwards successful, would have been deemed a sublime daring; which, unsuccessful, has been construed by the vulgar into a frantic insolence; but which, calmly considering all the circumstances that urged on the Tribune, and all the power that surrounded him, was not, perhaps, altogether so imprudent as it seemed. And, even accepting that imprudence in the extremest sense,—by the more penetrating judge of the higher order of character, it will probably be considered as the magnificent folly of a bold nature, excited at once by position and prosperity, by religious credulities, by patriotic aspirings, by scholastic visions too suddenly transferred from reverie to action, beyond that wise and earthward policy which sharpens the weapon ere it casts the gauntlet.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FESTIVAL.

THE Festival of that day was far the most sumptuous hitherto known. The hint of Cecco del Vecchio, which so well depicted the character of his fellow-citizens, as yet it exists, though not to such excess, in their love of holyday pomp and gorgeous show, was not lost upon Rienzi. One instance of the universal banqueting (intended, indeed, rather for the people than the higher ranks) may illustrate the more than royal profusion that prevailed. From morn till eve, streams of wine flowed like a fountain from the nostrils of the Horse of the great Equestrian Statue of Constantine. The mighty halls of the Lateran palace, open to all ranks, were prodigally spread; and the games, sports, and buffooneries of the time, were in ample requisition. Apart, the Tribunessa, as Nina was rather unclassically entitled, entertained the dames of Rome; while the Tribune had so effectually silenced or conciliated Raimond, that the good Bishop shared his peculiar table—the only one admitted to that honour. As the eye ranged each saloon and hall—it beheld the space lined with all the nobility and knighthood—the wealth and strength—the learning and the beauty—of the Italian metropolis; mingled with ambassadors and noble strangers, even from beyond the Alps;¹—envoys not only of the free states that had welcomed the rise of the Tribune, but of the high-born and haughty tyrants who had first derided his arrogance, and now cringed to his power. There, were not the ambassadors of Florence, of Sienna, of Arezzo (which last subjected its government to the Tribune), of Todi, of Spoleto, and of countless other lesser towns and states, but of the dark and terrible Visconti, prince of Milan; of Obizzo of Ferrara, and the tyrant rulers of Verona, and Bologna; even the proud and sagacious Malatesta,

¹ The simple and credulous biographer of Rienzi declares his fame to have reached the ears of the Soldan of Babylon.

lord of Rimini, whose arm afterwards broke for a while the power of Montreal, at the head of his Great Company, had deputed his representative in his most honoured noble. John di Vico, the worst and most malignant despot of his day, who had sternly defied the arms of the Tribune, now subdued and humbled, was there in person ; and the ambassadors of Hungary and of Naples mingled with those of Bavaria and Bohemia, whose sovereigns that day had been cited to the Roman Judgment Court. The nodding of plumes, the glitter of jewels and cloth of gold, the rustling of silks and jingle of golden spurs, the waving of banners from the roof, the sounds of minstrelsy from the galleries above, all presented a picture of such power and state—a court and chivalry of such show—as the greatest of the feudal kings might have beheld with a sparkling eye and a swelling heart. But at that moment the cause and lord of all that splendour, recovered from his late exhilaration, sat moody and abstracted, remembering with a thoughtful brow the adventure of the past night, and sensible that amongst his gaudiest revellers lurked his intended murderers. Amidst the swell of the minstrelsy and the pomp of the crowd, he felt that treason scowled beside him ; and the image of the skeleton obtruding, as of old, its grim thought of death upon the feast, darkened the ruby of the wine, and chilled the glitter of the scene.

It was while the feast was loudest that Rienzi's page was seen gliding through the banquet, and whispering several of the nobles ; each bowed low, but changed colour as he received the message.

“My Lord Savelli,” said Orsini, himself trembling, “bear yourself more bravely. This must be meant in honour, not revenge. I suppose your summons corresponds with mine.”

“He—he—asks—asks—me to supper at the Capitol ; a fri—endly meeting—(pest on his friendship !)—after the noise of the day.”

“The words addressed also to me !” said Orsini, turning to one of the Frangipani.

Those who received the summons soon broke from the feast,

and collected in a group, eagerly conferring. Some were for flight, but flight was confession; their number, rank, long and consecrated impunity, reassured them, and they resolved to obey. The old Colonna, the sole innocent Baron of the invited guests, was also the only one who refused the invitation. "Tush!" said he, peevishly; "here is feasting enough for one day! Tell the Tribune that ere he sups I hope to be asleep. Grey hairs cannot encounter all this fever of festivity."

As Rienzi rose to depart, which he did early, for the banquet took place while yet morning, Raimond, eager to escape and confer with some of his spiritual friends, as to the report he should make to the Pontiff, was beginning his expressions of farewell, when the merciless Tribune said to him gravely—

"My Lord, we want you on urgent business at the Capitol. A prisoner—a trial—perhaps (he added with his portentous and prophetic frown) an *execution* waits us! Come."

"Verily, Tribune," stammered the good Bishop, "this is a strange time for execution!"

"Last night was a time yet more strange.—Come."

There was something in the way in which the final word was pronounced, that Raimond could not resist. He sighed, muttered, twitched his robes, and followed the Tribune. As he passed through the halls, the company rose on all sides. Rienzi repaid their salutations with smiles and whispers of frank courtesy and winning address. Young as he yet was, and of a handsome and noble presence, that took every advantage from splendid attire, and yet more from an appearance of intellectual command in his brow and eye, which the less cultivated signors of that dark age necessarily wanted—he glittered through the court as one worthy to form, and fitted to preside over, it; and his supposed descent from the Teuton Emperor, which, since his greatness, was universally bruited and believed abroad, seemed undeniably visible to the foreign lords in the majesty of his mien and the easy blandness of his address.

"My Lord Prefect," said he to a dark and sullen personage in black velvet, the powerful and arrogant John di Vico, prefect of Rome, "we are rejoiced to find so noble a guest at Rome:

we must repay the courtesy by surprising you in your own palace ere long ;—nor will you, Signor (as he turned to the envoy from Tivoli), refuse us a shelter amidst your groves and waterfalls ere the vintage be gathered. Methinks Rome, united with sweet Tivoli, grows reconciled to the Muses. Your suit is carried, Master Venoni: the council recognises its justice ; but I reserved the news for this holiday—you do not blame me, I trust.” This was whispered, with a half-affectionate frankness, to a worthy citizen, who, finding himself amidst so many of the great, would have shrunk from the notice of the Tribune ; but it was the policy of Rienzi to pay an especial and marked attention to those engaged in commercial pursuits. As, after tarrying a moment or two with the merchant, he passed on, the tall person of the old Colonna caught his eye—

“Signor,” said he, with a profound inclination of his head, but with a slight emphasis of tone, “you will not fail us this evening.”

“Tribune——” began the Colonna.

“We receive no excuse,” interrupted the Tribune, hastily, and passed on.

He halted for a few moments before a small group of men plainly attired, who were watching him with intense interest ; for they, too, were scholars, and in Rienzi’s rise they saw another evidence of that wonderful and sudden power which intellect had begun to assume over brute force. With these, as if abruptly mingled with congenial spirits, the Tribune relaxed all the gravity of his brow. Happier, perhaps, his living career—more unequivocal his posthumous renown—had his objects as his tastes been theirs !

“Ah, *carissime* !” said he to one, whose arm he drew within his own,—“and how proceeds thy interpretation of the old marbles ?—half unravelled ? I rejoice to hear it ! Confer with me as of old, I pray thee. To-morrow—no, nor the day after, but next week—we will have a tranquil evening. Dear poet, your ode transported me to the days of Horace ; yet, methinks, we do wrong to reject the vernacular for the Latin. You shake your head ? Well, Petrarch thinks with you : his great epic moves with the stride of a giant—so I hear from his friend and

envoy,—and here he is. My Lælius, is that not your name with Petrarch? How shall I express my delight at his comforting, his inspiring letter? Alas! he overrates not my intentions, but my power. Of this hereafter."

A slight shade darkened the Tribune's brow at these words: but moving on, a long line of nobles and princes on either side, he regained his self-possession, and the dignity he had dropped with his former equals. Thus he passed through the crowd, and gradually disappeared.

"He bears him bravely," said one, as the revellers reseated themselves. "Noticed you the *we*—the style royal?"

"But it must be owned that he lords it well," said the ambassador of the Visconti: "less pride would be cringing to his haughty court."

"Why," said a professor of Bologna, "why is the Tribune called proud? I see no pride in him."

"Nor I," said a wealthy jeweller.

While these, and yet more contradictory comments followed the exit of the Tribune, he passed into the saloon, where Nina presided; and here his fair person and silver tongue ("*Suavis coloratæque sententiæ*," according to the description of Petrarch) won him a more general favour with the matrons than he experienced with their lords, and not a little contrasted the formal and nervous compliments of the good Bishop, who served him on such occasions with an excellent foil.

But as soon as the ceremonies were done, and Rienzi mounted his horse, his manner changed at once into a stern and ominous severity.

"Vicar," said he, abruptly, to the Bishop, "we might well need your presence. Learn that at the Capitol now sits the Council in judgment upon an assassin. Last night, but for Heaven's mercy, I should have fallen a victim to a hireling's dagger. Knew you aught of this?"

And he turned so sharply on the Bishop, that the poor canonist nearly dropped from his horse in surprise and terror.

"I!" said he.

Rienzi smiled—"No, good my Lord Bishop! I see you are of

no murtherer's mould. But to continue :—that I might not appear to act in mine own cause, I ordered the prisoner to be tried in my absence. In his trial (you marked the letter brought me at our banquet ?)——”

“ Ay, and you changed colour.”

“ Well I might : in his trial, I say, he has confessed that some of the loftiest lords of Rome were his instigators. *They sup with me to-night !*—Vicar, forwards ! ”

BOOK V.

THE CRISIS.

Questo ha acceso 'l fuoco e la fiamma laquale non la par spotegnere.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 29.

He has kindled fire and flames which he will not be able to extinguish.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE TRIBUNE.

THE brief words of the Tribune to Stephen Colonna, though they sharpened the rage of the proud old noble, were such as he did not on reflection deem it prudent to disobey. Accordingly, at the appointed hour, he found himself in one of the halls of the Capitol, with a gallant party of his peers. Rienzi received them with more than his usual graciousness.

They sate down to the splendid board in secret uneasiness and alarm, as they saw that, with the exception of Stephen Colonna, none, save the conspirators, had been invited to the banquet. Rienzi, regardless of their silence and abstraction, was more than usually gay—the old Colonna more than usually sullen.

“We fear we have but ill pleased you, my Lord Colonna, by our summons. Once, methinks, we might more easily provoke you to a smile.”

“Situations are changed, Tribune, since you were my guest.”

“Why, scarcely so. I have risen, but you have not fallen. Ye walk the streets day and night in security and peace; your lives

are safe from the robber, and your palaces no longer need bars and battlements to shield you from your fellow-citizens. I have risen, but *we all* have risen—from barbarous disorder into civilized life! My Lord Gianni Colonna, whom we have made Captain over Campagna, you will not refuse a cup to the Buono Stato;—nor think we mistrust your valour, when we say, that we rejoice Rome hath no enemies to attest your generalship.”

“Methinks,” quoth the old Colonna, bluntly, “we shall have enemies enough from Bohemia and Bavaria, ere the next harvest be green.”

“And, if so,” replied the Tribune, calmly, “foreign foes are better than civil strife.”

“Ay, if we have money in the treasury; which is but little likely, if we have many more such holydays.”

“You are ungracious, my Lord,” said the Tribune; “and besides, you are more uncomplimentary to Rome than to ourselves. What citizen would not part with gold to buy fame and liberty?”

“I know very few in Rome that would,” answered the Baron. “But tell me, Tribune, you who are a notable casuist, which is the best for a state—that its governor should be over-thrifty or over-lavish?”

“I refer the question to my friend, Luca di Savelli,” replied Rienzi. “He is a grand philosopher, and I wot well could explain a much knottier riddle, which we will presently submit to his acumen.”

The Barons, who had been much embarrassed by the bold speech of the old Colonna, all turned their eyes to Savelli, who answered with more composure than was anticipated.

“The question admits a double reply. He who is *born* a ruler, and maintains a foreign army, governing by fear, should be penurious. He who is *made* ruler, who courts the people, and would reign by love, must win their affection by generosity, and dazzle their fancies by pomp. Such, I believe, is the usual maxim in Italy, which is rife in all experience of state wisdom.

The Barons unanimously applauded the discreet reply of Savelli, excepting only the old Colonna.

“Yet pardon me, Tribune,” said Stephen, “if I depart from

the courtier-like decision of our friend, and opine, though with all due respect, that even a friar's coarse serge,¹ the parade of humility, would better become thee, than this gaudy pomp, the parade of pride!" So saying, he touched the large loose sleeve fringed with gold, of the Tribune's purple robe.

"Hush, father!" said Gianni, Colonna's son, colouring at the unprovoked rudeness and dangerous candour of the veteran.

"Nay, it matters not," said the Tribune, with affected indifference, though his lip quivered, and his eye shot fire; and then, after a pause, he resumed with an awful smile—"If the Colonna love the serge of the friar, he may see enough of it ere we part. And now, my Lord Savelli, for my question, which I pray you listen to; it demands all your wit. Is it best for a State's Ruler to be over-forgiving, or over-just? Take breath to answer: you look faint—you grow pale—you tremble—you cover your face! Traitor and assassin, your conscience betrays you! My Lords, relieve your accomplice, and take up the answer."

"Nay, if we are discovered," said the Orsini, rising in despair, "we will not fall unavenged—die, tyrant!"

He rushed to the place where Rienzi stood—for the Tribune also rose,—and made a thrust at his breast with his dagger; the steel pierced the purple robe, yet glanced harmlessly away—and the Tribune regarded the disappointed murderer with a scornful smile.

"Till yesternight, I never dreamt that under the robe of state I should need the secret corselet," said he. "My Lords, you have taught me a dark lesson, and I thank ye."

So saying, he clapped his hands, and suddenly the folding doors at the end of the hall flew open, and discovered the saloon of the Council hung with silk of a blood-red, relieved by rays of white,—the emblem of crime and death. At a long table sate the councillors in their robes; at the bar stood a ruffian form, which the banqueters too well recognized.

"Bid Rodolf of Saxony approach!" said the Tribune.

And led by two guards, the robber entered the hall.

¹ "Vestimenta da Bizoco," was the phrase used by Colonna; a phrase borrowed from certain heretics (*bizocchi*) who affected extreme austerity; afterwards the word passed into a proverb.—See the comments of Zefirino Re, in *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*.

"Wretch, *you* then betrayed us!" said one of the Frangipani.

"Rodolf of Saxony goes ever to the highest bidder," returned the miscreant with a horrid grin. "You gave me gold, and I would have slain your foe; your foe defeated me; he gives me life, and life is a greater boon than gold!"

"Ye confess your crime, my Lords! Silent! dumb! Where is your wit, Savelli? Where your pride, Rinaldo di Orsini? Gianni Colonna, is your chivalry come to this?"

"Oh!" continued Rienzi, with deep and passionate bitterness; "oh, my Lords, will nothing conciliate you—not to me, but to Rome? What hath been my sin against you and yours? Disbanded ruffians (such as your accuser)—dismantled fortresses—impartial law—what man, in all the wild revolutions of Italy, sprung from the people, ever yielded less to their licence? Not a coin of your coffers touched by wanton power,—not a hair of your heads harmed by private revenge. You, Gianni Colonna, loaded with honours, intrusted with command—you, Alphonso di Frangipani, endowed with new principalities,—did the Tribune remember one insult he received from you as the Plebeian? You accuse my pride;—was it my fault that ye cringed and fawned upon my power,—flattery on your lips, poison at your hearts? No, *I* have not offended you; let the world know, that in me you aimed at liberty, justice, law, order, the restored grandeur, the renovated rights of Rome! At these, the Abstract and the Immortal—not at this frail form, ye struck;—by the divinity of these ye are defeated;—for the outraged majesty of these,—criminals and victims,—ye must die!"

With these words, uttered with the tone and air that would have become the loftiest spirit of the ancient city, Rienzi, with a majestic step, swept from the chamber into the Hall of Council.¹

All that night the conspirators remained within that room, the doors locked and guarded; the banquet unremoved, and its splendour strangely contrasting the mood of the guests.

The utter prostration and despair of these dastard criminals—so unlike the knightly nobles of France and England, has been

¹ The guilt of the Barons in their designed assassination of Rienzi, though hastily slurred over by Gibbon, and other modern writers, is clearly attested by Muratori, the Bolognese Chronicle, &c.—*They even confessed the crime.* (See *Cron. Estens: Muratori*, tom. xviii. p. 442.)

painted by the historian in odious and withering colours. The old Colonna alone sustained his impetuous and imperious character. He strode to and fro the room like a lion in his cage, uttering loud threats of resentment and defiance; and beating at the door with his clenched hands, demanding egress, and proclaiming the vengeance of the Pontiff.

The dawn came, slow and grey upon that agonized assembly: and just as the last star faded from the melancholy horizon, and by the wan and comfortless heaven, they regarded each other's faces, almost spectral with anxiety and fear, the great bell of the Capitol sounded the notes in which they well recognised the chime of death! It was then that the door opened, and a drear and gloomy procession of cordeliers, one to each Baron, entered the apartment! At that spectacle, we are told, the terror of the conspirators was so great, that it froze up the very power of speech.¹ The greater part at length, deeming all hope over, resigned themselves to their ghostly confessors. But when the friar appointed to Stephen approached that passionate old man, he waved his hand impatiently, and said—"Tease me not! tease me not!"

"Nay, son, prepare for the awful hour."

"Son, indeed!" quoth the Baron. "I am old enough to be thy grandsire; and for the rest, tell him who sent thee, that I neither am prepared for death, nor will prepare! I have made up my mind to live these twenty years, and longer too; if I catch not my death with the cold of this accursed night."

Just at that moment a cry that almost seemed to rend the Capitol asunder was heard, as, with one voice, the multitude below yelled forth—

"Death to the conspirators!—death! death!"

While this the scene in that hall, the Tribune issued from his chamber, in which he had been closeted with his wife and sister. The noble spirit of the one, the tears and grief of the other (who saw at one fell stroke perish the house of her betrothed), had not worked without effect upon a temper, stern and just indeed, but naturally averse from blood; and a heart capable of the loftiest species of revenge.

¹ "Diventarono sì gelati, che non poteano favellare."

He entered the Council, still sitting, with a calm brow, and even a cheerful eye.

"Pandulfo di Guido," he said, turning to that citizen, "you are right, you spoke as a wise man and a patriot, when you said that to cut off with one blow, however merited, the noblest heads of Rome, would endanger the State, sully our purple with an indelible stain, and unite the nobility of Italy against us."

"Such, Tribune, was my argument, though the Council have decided otherwise."

"Hearken to the shouts of the populace, you cannot appease their honest warmth," said the demagogue Baroncelli.

Many of the Council murmured applause.

"Friends," said the Tribune, with a solemn and earnest aspect, "let not Posterity say that Liberty loves blood ; let us for once adopt the example and imitate the mercy of our great Redeemer ! We have triumphed—let us forbear ; we are saved—let us forgive !"

The speech of the Tribune was supported by Pandulfo, and others of the more mild and moderate policy ; and after a short but animated discussion, the influence of Rienzi prevailed, and the sentence of death was revoked, but by a small majority.

"And now," said Rienzi, "let us be more than just ; let us be generous. Speak—and boldly. Do any of ye think that I have been over-hard, over-haughty with these stubborn spirits ?—I read your answer in your brows !—I have ! Do any of ye think this error of mine may have stirred them to their dark revenge ? Do any of you deem that they partake, as we do, of human nature,—that they are sensible to kindness, that they are softened by generosity,—that they can be tamed and disarmed by such vengeance as is dictated to noble foes by Christian laws ?"

"I think," said Pandulfo, after a pause, "that it will not be in human nature, if the men you pardon, thus offending and thus convicted, again attempt your life !"

"Methinks," said Rienzi, "we must do even more than pardon. The first great Cæsar, when he did not crush a foe, strove to convert him to a friend——"

"And perished by the attempt," said Baroncelli, abruptly.

Rienzi started and changed colour.

"If you would save these wretched prisoners, better not wait till the fury of the mob become ungovernable," whispered Pandulfo.

The Tribune roused himself from his reverie.

"Pandulfo," said he, in the same tone, "my heart misgives me—the brood of serpents are in my hand—I do not strangle them—they may sting me to death in return for my mercy—it is their instinct! No matter: it shall not be said that the Roman Tribune bought with so many lives his own safety: nor shall it be written upon my grave-stone, 'Here lies the coward, who did not dare forgive.' What, ho! there, officers, unclosethe doors! My masters, let us acquaint your prisoners with their sentence."

With that, Rienzi seated himself on the chair of state, at the head of the table, and the sun, now risen, cast its rays over the blood-red walls, in which the Barons, marshalled in order into the chamber, thought to read their fate.

"My Lords," said the Tribune "ye have offended the laws of God and man: but God teaches man the quality of mercy. Learn, at last, that I bear a charmed life. Nor is he whom, for high purposes, Heaven hath raised from the cottage to the popular throne, without invisible aid and spiritual protection. If hereditary monarchs are deemed sacred, how much more one in whose power the divine hand hath writ its witness! Yes, over him who lives but for his country, whose greatness is his country's gift, whose life is his country's liberty, watch the souls of the just, and the unsleeping eyes of the sworded seraphim! Taught by your late failure and your present peril, bid your anger against me cease; respect the laws, revere the freedom of your city, and think that no state presents a nobler spectacle than men born as ye are—a patrician and illustrious order—using your power to protect your city, your wealth to nurture its arts, your chivalry to protect its laws! Take back your swords—and the first man who strikes against the liberties of Rome, let *him* be your victim; even though that victim be the Tribune. Your cause has been tried—your sentence is pronounced. Renew your oath to forbear all hostility, private or

public, against the government and the magistrates of Rome, and ye are pardoned—ye are free !”

Amazed, bewildered, the Barons mechanically bent the knee ; the friars who had received their confessions administered the appointed oath ; and while, with white lips, they muttered the solemn words, they heard below the roar of the multitude for their blood.

This ceremony ended, the Tribune passed into the banquet-hall, which conducted to a balcony, whence he was accustomed to address the people ; and never, perhaps, was his wonderful mastery over the passions of an audience (*ad persuadendum efficax dictator, quoque dulcis ac lepidus*)¹ more gently needed or more eminently shown than on that day ; for the fury of the people was at its height, and it was long ere he succeeded in turning it aside. Before he concluded, however, every wave of the wild sea lay hushed.—The orator lived to stand on the same spot, to plead for a life nobler than those he now saved,—and to plead unheard and in vain !

As soon as the Tribune saw the favourable moment had arrived, the Barons were admitted into the balcony :—in the presence of the breathless thousands, they solemnly pledged themselves to protect the Good Estate. And thus the morning which seemed to dawn upon their execution witnessed their reconciliation with the people.

The crowd dispersed, the majority soothed and pleased ;—the more sagacious, vexed and dissatisfied.

“He has but increased the smoke and the flame which he was not able to extinguish,” growled Cecco del Vecchio ; and the smith’s appropriate saying passed into a proverb and a prophecy.

Meanwhile, the Tribune, conscious at least that he had taken the more generous course, broke up the Council, and retired to the chamber where Nina and his sister waited him. These beautiful young women had conceived for each other the tenderest affection. And their differing characters, both of mind and feature, seemed by contrast to heighten the charms of both ; as in a skilful jewellery, the pearl and diamond borrow beauty from each other.

¹ Petrarch of Rienzi.

And as Irene now turned her pale countenance and streaming eyes from the bosom to which she had clung for support, the timid sister, anxious, doubtful, wistful ;—the proud wife, sanguine and assured, as if never diffident of the intentions nor of the power of her Rienzi :—the contrast would have furnished to a painter no unworthy incarnation of the Love that hopeth, and the Love that feareth, all things.

“Be cheered, my sweet sister,” said the Tribune, first caught by Irene’s imploring look ; “not a hair on the heads of those who boast the name of him thou lovest so well is injured.—Thank Heaven,” as his sister, with a low cry, rushed into his arms, “that it was against my life they conspired ! Had it been another Roman’s, mercy might have been a crime ! Dearest, may Adrian love thee half as well as I ; and yet, my sister and my child, none can know thy soft soul like he who watched over it since its first blossom expanded to the sun. My poor brother ! had he lived, your council had been his ; and methinks his gentle spirit often whispers away the sternness which, otherwise, would harden over mine. Nina, my queen, my inspirer, my monitor—ever thus let thy heart, masculine in my distress, be woman’s in my power ; and be to me, with Irene, upon earth, what my brother is in heaven !”

The Tribune, exhausted by the trials of the night, retired for a few hours to rest ; and as Nina, encircling him within her arms, watched over his noble countenance—care hushed, ambition laid at rest, its serenity had something almost of sublime. And tears of that delicious pride which woman sheds for the hero of her dreams, stood heavy in the wife’s eyes, as she rejoiced more, in the deep stillness of her heart, at the prerogative, alone hers, of sharing his solitary hours, than in all the rank to which his destiny had raised her, and which her nature fitted her at once to adorn and to enjoy. In that calm and lonely hour she beguiled her heart by waking dreams, vainer than the sleeper’s ; and pictured to herself the long career of glory, the august decline of peace, which were to await her lord.

And while she thus watched and thus dreamed, the cloud, as yet no bigger than a man’s hand, darkened the horizon of a fate whose sunshine was well-nigh past !

CHAPTER II.

THE FLIGHT.

FRETTING his proud heart, as a steed frets on the bit, old Colonna regained his palace. To him, innocent of the proposed crime of his kin and compeers, the whole scene of the night and morning presented but one feature of insult and degradation. Scarce was he in his palace, ere he ordered couriers, in whom he knew he could confide, to be in preparation for his summons. "This to Avignon," said he to himself, as he concluded an epistle to the Pontiff.—"We will see whether the friendship of the great house of the Colonna will outweigh the frantic support of the rabble's puppet.—This to Palestrina—the rock is inaccessible!—This to John di Vico, he may be relied upon, traitor though he be!—this to Naples; the Colonna will disown the Tribune's ambassador, if he throw not up the trust and hasten hither, not a lover but a soldier!—And may this find Walter de Montreal! Ah, a precious messenger he sent us, but I will forgive all—all, for a thousand lances." And as with trembling hands he twined the silk round his letters, he bade his pages invite to his board, next day, all the signors who had been implicated with him on the previous night.

The Barons came—far more enraged at the disgrace of pardon, than grateful for the boon of mercy. Their fears combined with their pride; and the shouts of the mob, the whine of the cordeliers, still ringing in their ears, they deemed united resistance the only course left to protect their lives, and avenge their affront.

To them the public pardon of the Tribune seemed only a disguise to private revenge. All they believed was, that Rienzi did not dare to destroy them in the face of day; forgetfulness and forgiveness appeared to them as the means designed to lull their vigilance, while abasing their pride; and the knowledge of crime detected forbade them all hope of safety. The hand of their own assassin might be armed against them, or they might

be ruined singly, one by one, as was the common tyrant-craft of that day. Singularly enough, Luca di Savelli was the most urgent for immediate rebellion. The fear of death made the coward brave.

Unable even to conceive the romantic generosity of the Tribune, the Barons were yet more alarmed when, the next day, Rienzi, summoning them one by one to a private audience, presented them with gifts, and bade them forget the past: excused himself rather than them, and augmented their offices and honours.

In the Quixotism of a heart to which royalty was natural he thought that there was no medium course; and that the enmity he would not silence by death, he could crush by confidence and favours. Such conduct from a born king to hereditary inferiors might have been successful; but the generosity of one who has abruptly risen over his lords is but the ostentation of insult. Rienzi in this, and, perhaps, in forgiveness itself, committed a fatal error of *policy*, which the dark sagacity of a Visconti, or, in later times, of a Borgia, would never have perpetrated. But it was the error of a bright and a great mind.

Nina was seated in the grand saloon of the palace—it was the day of reception for the Roman ladies.

The attendance was so much less numerous than usual that it startled her, and she thought there was a coldness and restraint in the manner of the visitors present, which somewhat stung her vanity.

“I trust we have not offended the Signora Colonna,” she said to the Lady of Gianni, Stephen’s son. “She was wont to grace our halls, and we miss much her stately presence.”

“Madam, my Lord’s mother is unwell!”

“Is she so? We will send for her more welcome news. Methinks we are deserted to-day.”

As she spoke, she carelessly dropped her handkerchief—the haughty dame of the Colonna bent not—not a hand stirred; and the Tribunessa looked for a moment surprised and disconcerted. Her eye roving over the throng, she perceived several, whom she knew as the wives of Rienzi’s foes, whispering together with meaning glances, and more than one malicious

sneer at her mortification was apparent. She recovered herself instantly, and said to the Signora Frangipani, with a smile, "May we be a partaker of your mirth? You seem to have chanced on some gay thought, which it were a sin not to share freely."

The lady she addressed coloured slightly, and replied, "We were thinking, madam, that had the Tribune been present, his vow of knighthood would have been called into requisition."

"And how, Signora?"

"It would have been his pleasing duty, madam, to succour the distressed." And the Signora glanced significantly on the kerchief still on the floor.

"You designed me, then, this slight, Signoras," said Nina, rising with great majesty. "I know not whether your Lords are equally bold to the Tribune; but this I know, that the Tribune's wife can in future forgive your absence. Four centuries ago, a Frangipani might well have stooped to a Raselli; to-day, the dame of a Roman Baron might acknowledge a superior in the wife of the first magistrate of Rome. I compel not your courtesy, nor seek it."

"We have gone too far," whispered one of the ladies to her neighbour. "Perhaps the enterprise may not succeed; and then——"

Further remark was cut short by the sudden entrance of the Tribune. He entered with great haste, and on his brow was that dark frown which none ever saw unquailing.

"How, fair matrons!" said he, looking round the room with a rapid glance, "ye have not deserted us yet? By the blessed cross, your Lords pay a compliment to our honour, to leave us such lovely hostages, or else, God's truth, they are ungrateful husbands. So, madam," turning sharp round to the wife of Gianni Colonna, "your husband is fled to Palestrina; yours, Signora Orsini, to Marino; yours with him, fair bride of Frangipani,—ye came hither to——. But *ye* are sacred even from a word!"

The Tribune paused a moment, evidently striving to suppress his emotion, as he observed the terror he had excited—his eye fell upon Nina, who, forgetting her previous vexation, regarded him with anxious amazement. "Yes," said he to her, "you

alone, perhaps, of this fair assemblage, know not that the nobles whom I lately released from the headsman's gripe are a second time forsworn. They have left home in the dead of night, and already the heralds proclaim them traitors and rebels. *Rienzi forgives no more!*"

"Tribune," exclaimed the Signora Frangipani, who had more bold blood in her veins than her whole house, "were I of thine own sex, I would cast the words, traitor and rebel, given to my Lord in thine own teeth! Proud man, the Pontiff soon will fulfil that office!"

"Your Lord is blest with a dove, fair one," said the Tribune, scornfully. "Ladies, fear not, while Rienzi lives, the wife even of his worst foe is safe and honoured. The crowd will be here anon; our guards shall attend ye home in safety, or this palace may be your shelter—for, I warn ye, that your Lords have rushed into a great peril. And ere many days be passed, the streets of Rome may be as rivers of blood."

"We accept your offer, Tribune," said the Signora Frangipani, who was touched, and, in spite of herself, awed by the Tribune's manner. And as she spoke, she dropped on one knee, picked up the kerchief, and, presenting it respectfully to Nina, said, "Madam, forgive me. I alone of these present respect you more in danger than in pride."

"And I," returned Nina, as she leaned in graceful confidence on Rienzi's arm, "I reply, that if there be danger, the more need of pride."

All that day and all that night rang the great bell of the Capitol. But on the following daybreak, the assemblage was thin and scattered; there was a great fear stricken into the hearts of the people by the flight of the Barons, and they bitterly and loudly upbraided Rienzi for sparing them to this opportunity of mischief. That day the rumours continued; the murmurers for the most part remained within their houses, or assembled in listless and discontented troops. The next day dawned; the same lethargy prevailed. The Tribune summoned his Council, (which was a Representative assembly).

"Shall we go forth as we are," said he, "with such few as will follow the Roman standard?"

"No," replied Pandolfo, who, by nature timid, was yet well acquainted with the disposition of the people, and therefore a sagacious counsellor. "Let us hold back; let us wait till the rebels commit themselves by some odious outrage, and then hatred will unite the waverers, and resentment lead them."

This counsel prevailed; the event proved its wisdom. To give excuse and dignity to the delay, messengers were sent to Marino, whither the chief part of the Barons had fled, and which was strongly fortified, demanding their immediate return.

On the day on which the haughty refusal of the insurgents was brought to Rienzi, came fugitives from all parts of the Campagna. Houses burned—convents and vineyards pillaged—cattle and horses seized—attested the warfare practised by the Barons, and animated the drooping Romans, by showing the mercies they might expect for themselves. That evening, of their own accord, the Romans rushed into the place of the Capitol:—Rinaldo Orsini had seized a fortress in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome, and had set fire to a tower, the flames of which were visible to the city. The tenant of the tower, a noble lady, old and widowed, was burnt alive. Then rose the wild clamour—the mighty wrath—the headlong fury. The hour for action had arrived.¹

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE.

"I HAVE dreamed a dream," cried Rienzi, leaping from his bed. "The lion-hearted Boniface, foe and victim of the Colonna, hath appeared to me, and promised victory.² Nina, prepare the laurel-wreath: this day victory shall be ours!"

"Oh, Rienzi! to-day?"

"Yes! hearken to the bell—hearken to the trumpet. Nay, I

¹ "Ardea terre, arse la Castelluzza e case, e uomini. Non si schifo di ardere una nobile donna Vedova, veterana, in una torre. Per tale crudeltade li Romani furo più irati," &c.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 20.

² "In questa notte mi è apparito Santo Bonifacio Papa," &c.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, cap. 32.

hear even now the impatient hoofs of my white war-steed ! One kiss, Nina, ere I arm for victory,—stay—comfort poor Irene ; let me not see her—she weeps that my foes are akin to her betrothed ; I cannot brook her tears ; I watched her in her cradle. To-day, I must have no weakness on my soul ! Knaves, twice perjured !—wolves, never to be tamed !—shall I meet ye at last sword to sword ? Away, sweet Nina, to Irene, quick ! Adrian is at Naples, and were he in Rome, her lover is sacred, though fifty times a Colonna.”

With that, the Tribune passed into his wardrobe, where his pages and gentlemen attended with his armour. “I hear, by our spies,” said he, “that they will be at our gates ere noon—four thousand foot, seven hundred horsemen. We will give them a hearty welcome, my masters. How, Angelo Villani, my pretty page, what do you out of your lady’s service ?”

“I would fain see a warrior arm for Rome,” said the boy, with a boy’s energy.”

“Bless thee, my child ; there spoke one of Rome’s true sons !”

“And the Signora has promised me that I shall go with her guard to the gates, to hear the news——”

“And report the victory ?—thou shalt. But they must not let thee come within shaft-shot. What ! my Pandulfo, thou in mail ?”

“Rome requires every man,” said the citizen, whose weak nerves were strung by the contagion of the general enthusiasm.

“She doth—and once more I am proud to be a Roman. Now, gentles, the Dalmaticum :¹ I would that every foe should know Rienzi ; and, by the Lord of Hosts, fighting at the head of the imperial people, I have a right to the imperial robe. Are the friars prepared ? Our march to the gates shall be preceded by a solemn hymn—so fought our sires.”

“Tribune, John di Vico is arrived with a hundred horse to support the Good Estate.”

“He hath !—The Lord has delivered us then of a foe, and given our dungeons a traitor !—Bring hither yon casket, Angelo.—So—Hark thee ! Pandulfo, read this letter.”

¹ A robe or mantle of white, borne by Rienzi ; at one time belonging to the sacerdotal office, afterwards an emblem of empire.

The citizen read, with surprise and consternation, the answer of the wily Prefect to the Colonna's epistle.

"He promises the Baron to desert to him in the battle, with the Prefect's banner," said Pandufo. "What is to be done?"

"What!—take my signet—here—see him lodged forthwith in the prison of the Capitol. Bid his train leave Rome, and if found acting with the Barons, warn them that their Lord dies. Go—see to it without a moment's delay. Meanwhile, to the chapel—we will hear mass."

Within an hour the Roman army—vast, miscellaneous—old men and boys, mingled with the vigour of life, were on their march to the Gate of San Lorenzo; of their number, which amounted to twenty thousand foot, not one-sixth could be deemed men-at-arms; but the cavalry were well equipped, and consisted of the lesser Barons and the more opulent citizens. At the head of those rode the Tribune in complete armour, and wearing on his casque a wreath of oak and olive leaves, wrought in silver. Before him waved the great gonfalon of Rome, while in front of this multitudinous array marched a procession of monks, of the order of St. Francis (for the ecclesiastical body of Rome went chiefly with the popular spirit, and its enthusiastic leader),—slowly chanting the following hymn, which was made inexpressibly startling and imposing at the close of each stanza, by the clash of arms, the blast of trumpets, and the deep roll of the drum; which formed, as it were, a martial chorus to the song:—

ROMAN WAR-SONG.

I.

March, march for your hearths and your altars!
 Cursed to all time be the dastard that falters,
 Never on earth may his sins be forgiven
 Death on his soul, shut the portals of heaven!
 A curse on his heart, and a curse on his brain!—
 Who strikes not for Rome, shall to Rome be her Cain!
 Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears,
*Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*¹

¹ Rienzi's word of battle was *Spirito Santo, Cavaliere*, i.e., Cavalier in the singular number. The plural number has been employed in the text, as somewhat more animated, and therefore better adapted to the kind of poetry into the service of which the watchword has been pressed.

Blow, trumpets, blow,
 Blow, trumpets, blow,
 Gaily to glory we come;
 Like a king in his pomp,
 To the blast of the tromp,
 And the roar of the mighty drum!
 Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears,
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!

2.

March, march for your Freedom and Laws!
 Earth is your witness—all Earth is your cause!
 Seraph and saint from their glory shall heed ye,
 The angel that smote the Assyrian shall lead ye;
 To the Christ of the Cross man is never so holy
 As in braving the proud in defence of the lowly!
 Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears,
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!
 Blow, trumpets, blow,
 Blow, trumpets, blow,
 Gaily to glory we come;
 Like a king in his pomp,
 To the blast of the tromp,
 And the roar of the mighty drum!
 Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears,
Spirito, Santo, Cavaliers!

3.

March, march! ye are sons of the Roman,
 The sound of whose step was as fate to the foeman!
 Whose realm, save the air and the wave, had no wall,
 As he strode through the world like a lord in his hall;
 Though your fame hath sunk down to the night of the grave,
 It shall rise from the field like the sun from the wave.
 Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears,
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!
 Blow, trumpets, blow,
 Blow, trumpets, blow,
 Gaily to glory we come;
 Like a king in his pomp,
 To the blast of the tromp,
 And the roar of the mighty drum!
 Breeze fill our banners, sun gild our spears,
Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!

In this order they reached the wide waste that ruin and devastation left within the gates, and, marshalled in long lines on either side, extending far down the vistaed streets, and leaving a broad space in the centre, awaited the order of their leader.

“Throw open the gates and admit the foe!” cried Rienzi, with a loud voice; as the trumpets of the Barons announced their approach.

Meantime the insurgent Patricians, who had marched that morning from a place called the Monument, four miles distant, came gallantly and boldly on.

With old Stephen, whose great height, gaunt frame, and lordly air, showed well in his gorgeous mail, rode his sons,—the Frangipani and the Savelli, and Giordano Orsini, brother to Rinaldo.

“To-day the tyrant shall perish!” said the proud Baron, “and the flag of the Colonna shall wave from the Capitol.”

“The flag of the Bear,” said Giordano Orsini, angrily. “The victory will not be *yours* alone, my Lord!”

“Our house ever took precedence in Rome,” replied the Colonna, haughtily.

“Never while one stone of the palaces of the Orsini stands upon another.”

“Hush!” said Luca di Savelli; “are ye dividing the skin while the lion lives? We shall have fierce work to-day.”

“Not so,” said the old Colonna; “John di Vico will turn, with his Romans, at the first onset, and some of the malcontents within have promised to open the gates.—How, knave?” as a scout rode up breathless to the Baron. “What tidings?”

“The gates are opened—not a spear gleams from the walls!”

“Did I not tell ye, Lords?” said the Colonna, turning round triumphantly. “Methinks we shall win Rome without a single blow.—Grandson, where now are thy silly forebodings?” This was said to Pietro, one of his grandsons—the first-born of Gianni—a comely youth, not two weeks wedded, who made no reply. “My little Pietro here,” continued the Baron, speaking to his comrades, “is so new a bridegroom, that last night he dreamed of his bride; and deems it, poor lad, a portent.”

“She was in deep mourning, and glided from my arms uttering ‘Woe, woe, to the Colonna!’” said the young man, solemnly.

“I have lived nearly ninety years,” replied the old man, “and I may have dreamed, therefore, some forty thousand dreams; of which, two came true, and the rest were false. Judge, then, what chances are in favour of the science!”

Thus conversing, they approached within bow-shot of the gates, which were still open. All was silent as death. The army, which was composed chiefly of foreign mercenaries, halted in deliberation—when, lo!—a torch was suddenly cast on high over the walls; it gleamed a moment—and then hissed in the miry pool below.

“It is the signal of our friends within, as agreed on,” cried old Colonna. “Pietro, advance with your company!” The young nobleman closed his visor, put himself at the head of the band under his command; and, with his lance in his rest, rode in a half gallop to the gates. The morning had been clouded and overcast, and the sun, appearing only at intervals, now broke out in a bright stream of light—as it glittered on the waving plume and shining mail of the young horseman, disappearing under the gloomy arch, several paces in advance of his troop. On swept his followers—forward went the cavalry headed by Gianni Colonna, Pietro’s father.—There was a minute’s silence, broken only by the clatter of the arms, and tramp of hoofs,—when from within the walls rose the abrupt cry—“Rome, the Tribune, and the People! *Spirito, Santo, Cavaliers!*” The main body halted aghast. Suddenly Gianni Colonna was seen flying backward from the gate at full speed.

“My son, my son!” he cried, “they have murdered him;”—he halted abrupt and irresolute, then adding, “But I will avenge!” wheeled round, and spurred again through the arch,—when a huge machine of iron, shaped as a portcullis, suddenly descended upon the unhappy father, and crushed man and horse to the ground—one blent, mangled, bloody mass.

The old Colonna saw, and scarce believed his eyes; and ere his troop recovered its stupor, the machine rose, and over the corpse dashed the Popular Armament. Thousands upon thousands, they came on; a wild, clamorous, roaring stream. They poured on all sides upon their enemies, who drawn up in steady discipline, and clad in complete mail, received and broke their charge.

“Revenge and the Colonna!”—“The Bear and the Orsini!”

—"Charity and the Frangipani!"¹ "Strike for the Snake and the Savelli!" were then heard on high, mingled with the German and hoarse shout, "Full purses, and the Three Kings of Cologne." The Romans, rather ferocious than disciplined, fell butchered in crowds round the ranks of the mercenaries: but as one fell, another succeeded; and still burst with undiminished fervour the counter-cry of "Rome, the Tribune, and the People!—*Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*" Exposed to every shaft and every sword by his emblematic diadem and his imperial robe, the fierce Rienzi led on each assault, wielding an enormous battle-axe, for the use of which the Italians were celebrated, and which he regarded as a national weapon. Inspired by every darker and sterner instinct of his nature, his blood heated, his passions aroused, fighting as a citizen for liberty, as a monarch for his crown, his daring seemed to the astonished foe as that of one frantic; his preservation that of one inspired: now here, now there; wherever flagged his own, or failed the opposing, force, glittered his white robe, and rose his bloody battle-axe; but his fury seemed rather directed against the chiefs than the herd; and still where his charger wheeled was heard his voice, "Where is a Colonna?"—"Defiance to the Orsini!"—" *Spirito Santo, Cavaliers!*" Three times was the sally led from the gate; three times were the Romans beaten back; and on the third, the gonfalon, borne before the Tribune, was cloven to the ground. Then, for the first time, he seemed amazed and alarmed, and, raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "O Lord, hast Thou then forsaken me?" With that, taking heart, once more he waved his arm, and again led forward his wild array.

At eve the battle ceased. Of the Barons who had been the main object of the Tribune's assault, the pride and boast was broken. Of the princely line of the Colonna, three lay dead. Giordano Orsini was mortally wounded; the fierce Rinaldo had not shared the conflict. Of the Frangipani, the haughtiest signors were no more; and Luca, the dastard head of the

¹ Who had taken their motto from some fabled ancestor who had broken bread with a beggar in a time of famine.

² The Lion was, however, the animal usually arrogated by the heraldic vanity of the Savelli.

Savelli, had long since saved himself by flight. On the other hand, the slaughter of the citizens had been prodigious;—the ground was swamped with blood—and over heaps of slain (steeds and riders) the twilight star beheld Rienzi and the Romans returning victors from the pursuit. Shouts of rejoicing followed the Tribune's panting steed through the arch; and just as he entered the space within, crowds of those whose infirmities, sex, or years, had not allowed them to share the conflict,—women, and children, and drivelling age, mingled with the bare feet and dark robes of monks and friars, apprised of the victory, were prepared to hail his triumph.

Rienzi reined his steed by the corpse of the boy Colonna, which lay half immersed in a pool of water, and close by it, removed from the arch where he had fallen, lay that of Gianni Colonna,—(that Gianni Colonna whose spear had dismissed his brother's gentle spirit). He glanced over the slain, as the melancholy Hesperus played upon the bloody pool and the gory corselet, with a breast heaved with many emotions; and turning, he saw the young Angelo, who, with some of Nina's guard, had repaired to the spot, and had now approached the Tribune.

"Child," said Rienzi, pointing to the dead, "*blessed art thou who hast no blood of kindred to avenge!*—to him who hath, sooner or later comes the hour; and an awful hour it is!"

The words sank deep into Angelo's heart, and in after life became words of fate to the speaker and the listener.

Ere Rienzi had well recovered himself, and as were heard around him the shrieks of the widows and mothers of the slain—the groans of the dying—the exhortations of the friars—mingled with sounds of joy and triumph—a cry was raised by the women and stragglers on the battle-field without, of "The foe!—the foe!"

"To your swords!" cried the Tribune; "fall back in order—yet they cannot be so bold!"

The tramp of horses, the blast of a trumpet, were heard; and presently, at full speed, some thirty horsemen dashed through the gate.

"Your bows," exclaimed the Tribune, advancing;—"yet hold

—the leader is unarmed—it is our own banner. By our Lady, it is our ambassador of Naples, the Lord Adrian di Castello!”

Panting—breathless—covered with dust—Adrian halted at the pool red with the blood of his kindred—and their pale faces, set in death, glared upon him.

“Too late—alas! alas!—dread fate!—unhappy Rome!”

“They fell into the pit they themselves had digged,” said the Tribune, in a firm but hollow voice.—“Noble Adrian, would thy counsels had prevented this!”

“Away, proud man—away!” said Adrian, impatiently waving his hand,—“thou shouldst protect the lives of Romans, and—oh, Gianni!—Pietro!—could not birth, renown, and thy green years, poor boy—could not these save ye?”

“Pardon him, my friends,” said the Tribune to the crowd,—“his grief is natural, and he knows not all their guilt.—Back, I pray ye—leave him to our ministering.”

It might have fared ill for Adrian, but for the Tribune’s brief speech. And as the young lord, dismounting, now bent over his kinsmen—the Tribune also surrendering his charger to his ’squires, approached, and, despite Adrian’s reluctance and aversion, drew him aside,—

“Young friend,” said he, mournfully, “my heart bleeds for you; yet bethink ye, the wrath of the crowd is fresh upon them: be prudent.”

“Prudent!”

“Hush—by my honour, these men were not worthy of your name. Twice perjured—once assassins—twice rebels—listen to me!”

“Tribune, I ask no other construing of what I see—they might have died justly, or been butchered foully. But there is no peace between the executioner of my race and me.”

“Will *you*, too, be forsworn? Thine oath!—Come, come, I hear not these words. Be composed—retire—and if, three days hence, you impute any other blame to me than that of unwise lenity, I absolve you from your oath, and you are free to be my foe. The crowd gape and gaze upon us—a minute more, and I may not avail to save you.”

The feelings of the young patrician were such as utterly baffle description. He had never been much amongst his house, nor ever received more than common courtesy at their hands. But lineage is lineage still! And there, in the fatal hazard of war, lay the tree and sapling, the prime and hope of his race. He felt there was no answer to the Tribune, the very place of their death proved they had fallen in an assault upon their countrymen. He sympathised not with their cause, but their fate. And rage, revenge alike forbidden—his heart was the more softened to the shock and paralysis of grief. He did not therefore speak, but continued to gaze upon the dead, while large and unheeded tears flowed down his cheeks, and his attitude of dejection and sorrow was so moving, that the crowd, at first indignant, now felt for his affliction. At length his mind seemed made up. He turned to Rienzi, and said, falteringly, "Tribune, I blame you not, nor accuse. If you have been rash in this, God will have blood for blood. I wage no war with you—you say right, my oath prevents me; and if you govern well, I can still remember that I am Roman. But—but—look to that bleeding clay—we meet no more! your sister—God be with her!—between her and me flows a dark gulf!" The young noble paused some moments, choked by his emotions, and then continued, "These papers discharge me of my mission. Standard-bearers, lay down the banner of the Republic. Tribune, speak not—I would be calm—calm. And so farewell to Rome." With a hurried glance towards the dead, he sprung upon his steed, and, followed by his train, vanished through the arch.

The Tribune had not attempted to detain him—had not interrupted him. He felt that the young noble had thought—acted as became him best. He followed him with his eyes.

"And thus," said he gloomily, "Fate plucks from me my noblest friend and my justest counsellor—a better man Rome never lost!"

Such is the eternal doom of disordered states. The mediator between rank and rank,—the kindly noble—the dispassionate patriot—the first to act—the most hailed in action—darkly

vanishes from the scene. Fiercer and more unscrupulous spirits alone stalk the field ; and no neutral and harmonizing link remains between hate and hate,—until exhaustion, sick with horrors, succeeds to frenzy, and despotism is welcomed as repose !

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLLOWNESS OF THE BASE.

THE rapid and busy march of state events has led us long away from the sister of the Tribune and the betrothed of Adrian. And the sweet thoughts and gentle day-dreams of that fair and enamoured girl, however full to *her* of an interest beyond all the storms and perils of ambition, are not so readily adapted to narration :—their soft monotony a few words can paint. They knew but one image, they tended to but one prospect. Shrinking from the glare of her brother's court, and eclipsed, when she forced herself to appear, by the more matured and dazzling beauty, and all-commanding presence, of Nina,—to her the pomp and crowd seemed an unreal pageant, from which she retired to the *truth of life*,—the hopes and musings of her own heart. Poor girl ! with all the soft and tender nature of her dead brother, and none of the stern genius and the prodigal ambition,—the eye-fatiguing ostentation and fervour of the living—she was but ill-fitted for the unquiet but splendid region to which she was thus suddenly transferred.

With all her affection for Rienzi, she could not conquer a certain fear which, conjoined with the difference of sex and age, forbade her to be communicative with him upon the subject most upon her heart.

As the absence of Adrian at the Neapolitan Court passed the anticipated date (for at no Court then, with a throne fiercely disputed, did the Tribune require a nobler or more intelligent representative,—and intrigues and counter-intrigues delayed his departure from week to week), she grew uneasy and alarmed. Like many, themselves unseen, inactive, the spectators

of the scene, she saw involuntarily further into the time than the deeper intellect either of the Tribune or Nina; and the dangerous discontent of the nobles was visible and audible to her in looks and whispers, which reached not acuter or more suspected ears and eyes. Anxiously, restlessly, did she long for the return of Adrian, not from selfish motives alone, but from well-founded apprehensions for her brother. With Adrian di Castello, alike a noble and a patriot, each party had found a mediator, and his presence grew daily more needed, till at length the conspiracy of the Barons had broken out. From that hour she scarcely dared to hope; her calm sense, unblinded by the high-wrought genius which, as too often happens, made the Tribune see harsh realities through a false and brilliant light, perceived that the Rubicon was passed; and through all the events that followed she could behold but two images — danger to her brother, separation from her betrothed.

With Nina alone could her full heart confer; for Nina, with all the differences of character, was a woman who loved. And this united them. In the earlier power of Rienzi, many of their happiest hours had been passed together, remote from the gaudy crowd, alone and unrestrained, in the summer nights, on the moonlit balconies, in that interchange of thought, sympathy, and consolation, which to two impassioned and guileless women makes the most interesting occupation and the most effectual solace. But of late, this intercourse had been much marred. From the morning in which the Barons had received their pardon, to that on which they had marched on Rome, had been one succession of fierce excitements. Every face Irene saw was clouded and overcast—all gaiety was suspended—bustling and anxious councillors, or armed soldiers, had for days been the only visitors of the palace. Rienzi had been seen but for short moments: his brow wrapt in care. Nina had been more fond, more caressing than ever, but in those caresses there seemed a mournful and ominous compassion. The attempts at comfort and hope were succeeded by a sickly smile and broken words; and Irene was prepared, by the presentiments of her own heart, for the stroke that fell—victory was to her brother—his foe was crushed—Rome was free—but the lofty house of the Colonnas

had lost its stateliest props, and Adrian was gone for ever!--She did not blame him; she could not blame her brother; each had acted as became his several station. She was the poor sacrifice of events and fate—the Iphigenia to the Winds which were to bear the bark of Rome to the haven, or, it might be, to whelm it in the abyss. She was stunned by the blow; she did not even weep or complain; she bowed to the storm that swept over her, and it passed. For two days she neither took food nor rest; she shut herself up; she asked only the boon of solitude: but on the third morning she recovered as by a miracle, for on the third morning the following letter was left at the palace:—

“IRENE,—Ere this you have learned my deep cause of grief; you feel that to a Colonna, Rome can no longer be a home, nor Rome’s Tribune be a brother. While I write these words honour but feebly supports me: all the hopes I had formed, all the prospects I had pictured, all the love I bore and bear thee, rush upon my heart, and I can only feel that I am wretched. Irene, Irene, your sweet face rises before me, and in those beloved eyes I read that I am forgiven,—I am understood; and dearly as I know thou lovest me, thou wouldst rather I were lost to thee, rather I were in the grave with my kinsmen, than know I lived the reproach of my order, the recreant of my name. Ah! why was I a Colonna? why did Fortune make me noble, and nature and circumstance attach me to the people? I am barred alike from love and from revenge; all my revenge falls upon thee and me. Adored! we are perhaps separated for ever; but, by all the happiness I have known by thy side—by all the rapture of which I dreamed—by that delicious hour which first gave thee to my gaze, when I watched the soft soul returning to thine eyes and lip—by thy first blushing confession of love—by our first kiss—by our last farewell—I swear to be faithful to thee to the last. None other shall ever chase thine image from my heart. And now, when Hope seems over, Faith becomes doubly sacred; and thou, my beautiful, wilt thou not remember me? wilt thou not feel as if we were the betrothed of Heaven? In the legends of the North we are told of the knight who,

returning from the Holy Land, found his mistress (believing his death) the bride of Heaven, and he built a hermitage by the convent where she dwelt; and, though they never saw each other more, their souls were faithful unto death. Even so, Irene, be we to each other—dead to all else—betrothed in memory—to be wedded above! And yet, yet ere I close, one hope dawns upon me. Thy brother's career, bright and lofty, may be but as a falling star; should darkness swallow it, should his power cease, should his throne be broken, and Rome know no more her Tribune; shouldst thou no longer have a brother in the judge and destroyer of my house; shouldst thou be stricken from pomp and state; shouldst thou be friendless, kindredless, alone—then, without a stain on mine honour, without the shame and odium of receiving power and happiness from hands yet red with the blood of my race, I may claim thee as my own. Honour ceases to command when thou ceasest to be great. I dare not too fondly indulge this dream, perchance it is a sin in both. But it must be whispered, that thou mayest know all thy Adrian, all his weakness and his strength. My own loved, my ever loved, loved more fondly now when loved despairingly, farewell! May angels heal thy sorrow, and guard *me* from sin, that *hereafter* at least we may meet again!"

"He loves me—he loves me still!" said the maiden, weeping at last; "and I am blest once more!"

With that letter pressed to her heart she recovered outwardly from the depth of her affliction; she met her brother with a smile, and Nina with embraces; and if still she pined and sorrowed, it was in that "concealment" which is the "worm i' the bud."

Meanwhile, after the first flush of victory, lamentation succeeded to joy in Rome; so great had been the slaughter that the private grief was large enough to swallow up all public triumph; and many of the mourners blamed even their defender for the swords of the assailant, "*Roma fu terribilmente vedovata.*"¹ The numerous funerals deeply affected the Tribune;

¹ "Rome was terribly widowed."

and, in proportion to his sympathy with his people, grew his stern indignation against the Barons. Like all men whose religion is intense, passionate, and zealous, the Tribune had little toleration for those crimes which went to the root of religion. Perjury was to him the most base and inexpiable of offences, and the slain Barons had been twice perjured : in the bitterness of his wrath he forbade their families for some days to lament over their remains ; and it was only in private and in secret that he permitted them to be interred in their ancestral vaults : an excess of vengeance which sullied his laurels, but which was scarcely inconsistent with the stern patriotism of his character. Impatient to finish what he had begun, anxious to march at once to Marino, where the insurgents collected their shattered force, he summoned his Council, and represented the certainty of victory, and its result in the complete restoration of peace. But pay was due to the soldiery ; they already murmured ; the treasury was emptied, it was necessary to fill it by raising a new tax.

Among the councillors were some whose families had suffered grievously in the battle—they lent a lukewarm attention to propositions of continued strife. Others, among whom was Pandolfo, timid but well-meaning, aware that grief and terror even of their own triumph had produced reaction amongst the people, declared that they would not venture to propose a new tax. A third party, headed by Baroncelli—a demagogue whose ambition was without principle—but who, by pandering to the worst passions of the populace, by a sturdy coarseness of nature with which they sympathised—and by that affectation of advancing what we now term the “movement,” which often gives to the fiercest fool an advantage over the most prudent statesman, had quietly acquired a great influence with the lower ranks—offered a more bold opposition. They dared even to blame the proud Tribune for the gorgeous extravagance they had themselves been the first to recommend—and half insinuated sinister and treacherous motives in his acquittal of the Barons from the accusation of Rodolf. In the very Parliament which the Tribune had revived and remodelled for the support of freedom—freedom was abandoned. His fiery eloquence met

with a gloomy silence, and finally, the votes were against his propositions for the new tax and the march to Marino. Rienzi broke up the Council in haste and disorder. As he left the hall, a letter was put into his hands; he read it, and remained for some moments as one thunderstruck. He then summoned the Captain of his Guards, and ordered a band of fifty horsemen to be prepared for his commands; he repaired to Nina's apartment, he found her alone, and stood for some moments gazing upon her so intently that she was awed and chilled from all attempt at speech. At length he said, abruptly—

"We must part."

"Part!"

"Yes, Nina—your guard is preparing; you have relations, I have friends, at Florence. Florence must be your home."

"Cola,——"

"Look not on me thus.—In power, in state, in safety—you were my ornament and counsellor. *Now* you but embarrass me. And——"

"Oh, Cola, speak not thus! What hath chanced? Be not so cold—frown not—turn not away! Am I not something more to thee than the partner of joyous hours—the minion of love? Am I not thy wife, Cola—not thy leman?"

"Too dear—too dear to me," muttered the Tribune; "with thee by my side I shall be but half a Roman. Nina, the base slaves whom I myself made free desert me.—Now, in the very hour in which I might sweep away for ever all obstacles to the regeneration of Rome—now when one conquest points the path to complete success—now when the land is visible, my fortune suddenly leaves me in the midst of the seas! There is greater danger now than in the rage of the Barons—the Barons are fled; it is the People who are becoming traitors to Rome and to me."

"And wouldst thou have *me* traitor also? No, Cola; in death itself Nina shall be beside thee. Life and honour are reflected but from thee, and the stroke that slays the substance shall destroy the humble shadow. I will not part from thee."

"Mina," said the Tribune, contending with strong and convulsive emotion,—"*it may be literally of death that you speak. —Go! leave one who can no longer protect you or Rome!*"

"Never—never."

"You are resolved?"

"I am."

"Be it so," said the Tribune, with deep sadness in his tone. "Arm thyself for the worst."

"There is no *worst* with thee, Cola!"

"Come to my arms, brave woman; thy words rebuke my weakness. But my sister!—If *I* fall, *you*, Nina, will not survive—your beauty a prey to the most lustful heart and the strongest hand. *We* will have the same tomb on the wrecks of Roman liberty. But Irene is of weaker mould; poor child, I have robbed her of a lover, and now—"

"You are right; let Irene go. And in truth we may well disguise from her the real cause of her departure. Change of scene were best for her grief; and under all circumstances would seem decorum to the curious. I will see and prepare her."

"Do so, sweetheart. I would gladly be a moment alone with thought. But remember, she must part to-day—our sands run low."

As the door closed on Nina, the Tribune took out the letter and again read it deliberately. "So the Pope's Legate left Sienna:—prayed that Republic to withdraw its auxiliary troops from Rome—proclaimed me a rebel and a heretic;—thence repaired to Marino;—now in council with the Barons. Why, have my dreams belied me, then—false as the waking things that flatter and betray by day? In such peril will the people forsake me and themselves? Army of saints and martyrs, shades of heroes and patriots, have ye abandoned for ever your ancient home? No, no, I was not raised to perish thus; I will defeat them yet—and leave my name a legacy to Rome; a warning to the oppressor—an example to the free!"

CHAPTER V.

THE ROTTENNESS OF THE EDIFICE.

THE kindly skill of Nina induced Irene to believe that it was but the tender consideration of her brother to change a scene embittered by her own thoughts, and in which the notoriety of her engagement with Adrian exposed her to all that could mortify and embarrass, that led to the proposition of her visit to Florence. Its suddenness was ascribed to the occasion of an unexpected mission to Florence (for a loan of arms and money), which thus gave her a safe and honoured escort. Passively she submitted to what she herself deemed a relief; and it was agreed that she should for a while be the guest of a relation of Nina's who was the abbess of one of the wealthiest of the Florentine convents; the idea of monastic seclusion was welcome to the bruised heart and wearied spirit.

But though not apprised of the immediate peril of Rienzi, it was with deep sadness and gloomy forebodings that she returned his embrace and parting blessing; and when at length alone in her litter, and beyond the gates of Rome, she repented a departure to which the chance of danger gave the appearance of desertion.

Meanwhile, as the declining day closed around the litter and its troop, more turbulent actors in the drama demand our audience. The traders and artisans of Rome at that time, and especially during the popular government of Rienzi, held weekly meetings in each of the thirteen quarters of the city. And in the most democratic of these, Cecco del Vecchio was an oracle and leader. It was at that assembly, over which the smith presided, that the murmurs that preceded the earthquake were heard.

"So," cried one of the company—Luigi, the goodly butcher,—“they say he wanted to put a new tax on us; and that is the reason he broke up the Council to-day, because, good men,

they were honest, and had bowels for the people: it is a shame and a sin that the treasury should be empty."

"I told him," said the smith, "to beware how he taxed the people. Poor men won't be taxed. But as he does not follow my advice, he must take the consequence—the horse runs from one hand, the halter remains in the other."

"Take *your* advice, Cecco! I warrant me his stomach is too high for that now. Why, he is grown as proud as a pope."

"For all that, he is a great man," said one of the party. "He gave us laws—he rid the Campagna of robbers—filled the streets with merchants, and the shops with wares—defeated the boldest lords and fiercest soldiery of Italy——"

"And now wants to tax the people!—that's all the thanks we get for helping him," said the grumbling Cecco. "What would he have been without us?—we that make can unmake."

"But," continued the advocate, seeing that he had his supporters—"but then he taxes us for our own liberties."

"Who strikes at them now?" asked the butcher.

"Why, the Barons are daily mustering new strength at Marino."

"Marino is not Rome," said Luigi, the butcher. "Let's wait till they come to our gates again—we know how to receive them. Though, for the matter of that, I think we have had enough fighting—my two poor brothers had each a stab too much for them. Why won't the Tribune, if he *be* a great man, let us have peace? All we want now is quiet."

"Ah!" said a seller of horse-harness, "let him make it up with the Barons. They were good customers after all."

"For my part," said a merry-looking fellow, who had been a grave-digger in bad times, and had now opened a stall of wares for the living, "I could forgive him all, but bathing in the holy vase of porphyry."

"Ah, that was a bad job!" said several, shaking their heads.

"And the knighthood was but a silly show, an' it were not for the wine from the horse's nostrils—*that* had some sense in it."

"My masters," said Cecco, "the folly was in not beheading the Barons when he had them all in the net; and so Messere Baron-

celli says. (Ah, Baroncelli is an honest man, and follows no half measures!) It was a sort of treason to the people not to do so. Why, but for that, we should never have lost so many tall fellows by the gate of San Lorenzo."

"True, true, it was a shame; some say the Barons bought him."

"And then," said another, "those poor Lords Colonna—bcy and man—they were the best of the family, save the Castello. I vow I pitied them."

"But to the point," said one of the crowd, *the richest* of the set; "*the tax is the thing*. The ingratitude to tax *us*. Let him dare to do it!"

"Oh, he will not dare, for I hear that the Pope's bristles are up at last; so he will only have *us* to depend upon!"

The door was thrown open—a man rushed in open-mouthed—

"Masters, masters, the Pope's legate has arrived at Rome, and sent for the Tribune, who has just left his presence."

Ere his auditors had recovered their surprise, the sound of trumpets made them rush forth; they saw Rienzi sweep by with his usual cavalcade, and in his proud array. The twilight was advancing, and torch-bearers preceded his way. Upon his countenance was deep calm, but it was not the calm of contentment. He passed on, and the street was again desolate. Meanwhile Rienzi reached the Capitol in silence, and mounted to the apartments of the palace, where Nina, pale and breathless, awaited his return.

"Well, well, thou smilest! No—it is that dread smile, worse than frowns. Speak, beloved, speak! What said the Cardinal?"

"Little thou wilt love to hear. He spoke at first high and solemnly about the crime of declaring the Romans free; next about the treason of asserting that the election of the King of Rome was in the hands of the Romans."

"Well—thy answer."

"That which became Rome's Tribune: I re-asserted each right, and proved it. The Cardinal passed to other charges."

"What?"

"The blood of the Barons by San Lorenzo—blood only shed in our own defence against perjured assailants; this is in reality

the main crime. The Colonna have the Pope's ear. Furthermore, the sacrilege—yes, the sacrilege (come laugh, Nina, laugh!) of bathing in a vase of porphyry used by Constantine while yet a heathen."

"Can it be! What saidst thou?"

"I laughed. 'Cardinal,' quoth I, 'what was not too good for a heathen is not too good for a Christian Catholic!' And verily the sour Frenchman looked as if I had smote him on the hip. When he had done, I asked him, in my turn, 'Is it alleged against me that I have wronged one man in my judgment-court?'—Silence. 'Is it said that I have broken one law of the state?'—Silence. 'Is it even whispered that trade does not flourish—that life is not safe—that abroad or at home the Roman name is not honoured, to that point which no former rule can parallel?'—Silence. 'Then,' said I, 'Lord Cardinal, I demand thy thanks, not thy censure.' The Frenchman looked, and looked, and trembled, and shrunk, and then out he spoke. 'I have but one mission to fulfil, on the part of the Pontiff—resign at once thy Tribuneship, or the Church inflicts upon thee its solemn curse.'"

"How—how?" said Nina, turning very pale; "what is it that awaits thee?"

"Excommunication!"

This awful sentence, by which the spiritual arm had so often stricken down the fiercest foe, came to Nina's ears as a knell. She covered her face with her hands. Rienzi paced the room with rapid strides. "The curse!" he muttered; "the Church's curse—for me—for ME!"

"Oh, Cola! didst thou not seek to pacify this stern——"

"Pacify! Death and dishonour! Pacify! 'Cardinal,' I said, and I felt his soul shrivel at my gaze, 'my power I received from the people—to the people alone I render it. For my soul, man's words cannot scathe it. Thou, haughty priest, thou thyself art the accursed, if, puppet and tool of low cabals and exiled tyrants, thou breathest but a breath in the name of the Lord of Justice, for the cause of the oppressor, and against the rights of the oppressed.' With that I left him, and now——"

"Ay, now—now what will happen? Excommunication! In the metropolis of the Church, too—the superstition of the people! Oh, Cola!"

"If," muttered Rienzi, "my conscience condemned me of one crime—if I had stained my hands in one just man's blood—if I had broken one law I myself had framed—if I had taken bribes, or wronged the poor, or scorned the orphan, or shut my heart to the widow—then, then—but no! Lord, *thou* wilt not desert me!"

"But *man* may!" thought Nina, mournfully, as she perceived that one of Rienzi's dark fits of fanatical and mystical reverie was growing over him—fits which he suffered no living eye, not even Nina's, to witness when they gathered to their height. And now, indeed, after a short interval of muttered soliloquy, in which his face worked so that the veins on his temples swelled like cords, he abruptly left the room, and sought the private oratory connected with his closet. Over the emotions there indulged let us draw the veil. Who shall describe those awful and mysterious moments, when man, with all his fiery passions, turbulent thoughts, wild hopes, and despondent fears, demands the solitary audience of his Maker?

It was long after this conference with Nina, and the midnight bell had long tolled, when Rienzi stood alone, upon one of the balconies of the palace, to cool, in the starry air, the fever that yet lingered on his exhausted frame. The night was exceedingly calm, the air clear, but chill, for it was now December. He gazed intently upon those solemn orbs to which our wild credulity has referred the prophecies of our doom.

"Vain science!" thought the Tribune, "and gloomy fantasy, that man's fate is pre-ordained—irrevocable—unchangeable, from the moment of his birth! Yet, were the dream not baseless, fain would I know which of yon stately lights is my natal star,—which images—which reflects—my career in life, and the memory I shall leave in death." As this thought crossed him, and his gaze was still fixed above, he saw, as if made suddenly more distinct than the stars around it, that rapid and fiery comet which in the winter of 1347 dismayed the superstitions of those who recognised in the stranger of the

heavens the omen of disaster and of woe. He recoiled as it met his eye, and muttered to himself, "Is such indeed my type ! or, if the legendary lore speak true, and these strange fires portend nations ruined, and rulers overthrown, does it foretell my fate ? I will think no more."¹ As his eyes fell, they rested upon the colossal Lion of Basalt in the place below, the starlight investing its grey and towering form with a more ghostly whiteness ; and then it was, that he perceived two figures in black robes lingering by the pedestal which supported the statue, and apparently engaged in some occupation which he could not guess. A fear shot through his veins, for he had never been able to divest himself of the vague idea that there was some solemn and appointed connection between his fate and that old Lion of Basalt. Somewhat relieved, he heard his sentry challenge the intruders ; and as they came forward to the light, he perceived that they wore the garments of monks.

"Molest us not, son," said one of them to the sentry. "By order of the Legate of the Holy Father we affix to this public monument of justice and of wrath, the bull of excommunication against a heretic and rebel. **WOE TO THE ACCURSED OF THE CHURCH !**"

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALL OF THE TEMPLE.

IT was as a thunderbolt in a serene day—the reverse of the Tribune in the zenith of his power, in the abasement of his foe ; when, with but a handful of brave Romans, determined to be free, he might have crushed for ever the antagonist power to the Roman liberties—have secured the rights of his country, and filled up the measures of his own renown. Such a reverse was the very mockery of Fate, who bore him through disaster, to abandon him in the sunniest noon of his prosperity.

¹ Alas ! if by the Romans associated with the fall of Rienzi, that comet was by the rest of Europe connected with the more dire calamity of the Great Plague that so soon afterwards ensued.

The next morning not a soul was to be seen in the streets ; the shops were shut—the churches closed ; the city was as under an interdict. The awful curse of the papal excommunication upon the chief magistrate of the Pontifical city seemed to freeze up all the arteries of life. The Legate himself, affecting fear of his life, had fled to Monte Fiascone, where he was joined by the Barons immediately after the publication of the edict. The curse worked best in the absence of the execrator.

Towards evening a few persons might be seen traversing the broad space of the Capitol, crossing themselves, as the bull, placarded on the Lion, met their eyes, and disappearing within the doors of the great palace. By and by, a few anxious groups collected in the streets, but they soon dispersed. It was a paralysis of all intercourse and commune. That spiritual and unarmed authority, which, like the invisible hand of God, desolated the market-place, and humbled the crowned head, no physical force could rally against or resist. Yet through the universal awe, one conviction touched the multitude—it was for them that the Tribune was thus blasted in the midst of his glories ! The words of the Brand recorded against him on wall and column detailed his offences :—rebellion in asserting the liberties of Rome—heresy in purifying ecclesiastical abuses ;—and to serve for a miserable covert to the rest, it was sacrilege for bathing in the porphyry vase of Constantine ! They felt the conviction ; they sighed—they shuddered—and, in his vast palace, save a few attached and devoted hearts, the Tribune was alone !

The stanchest of the Tuscan soldiery was gone with Irene. The rest of the force, save a few remaining guards, was the paid Roman militia, composed of citizens ; who, long discontented by the delay of their stipends, now seized on the excuse of the excommunication to remain passive, but grumbling, in their homes.

On the third day, a new incident broke upon the death-like lethargy of the city ; a hundred and fifty mercenaries, with Pepin of Minorbino, a Neapolitan, half noble, half bandit (a creature of Montreal's), at their head, entered the city, seized

upon the fortresses of the Colonna, and sent a herald through the city, proclaiming, in the name of the Cardinal Legate the reward of ten thousand florins for the head of Cola di Rienzi.

Then, swelled on high, shrill but not inspiring as of old, the great bell of the Capitol—the people, listless, disheartened awed by the spiritual fear of the papal authority (yet greater, in such events, since the removal of the see), came unarmed to the Capitol; and there, by the Place of the Lion, stood the Tribune. His squires, below the step, held his war-horse, his helm, and the same battle-axe which had blazed in the van of victorious war.

Beside him were a few of his guard, his attendants, and two or three of the principal citizens.

He stood bareheaded and erect, gazing upon the abashed and unarmed crowd with a look of bitter scorn, mingled with deep compassion; and, as the bell ceased to toll, and the throng remained hushed and listening, he thus spoke:—

“Ye come, then, once again! Come ye as slaves or free-men? A handful of armed men are in your walls: will ye who chased from your gates the haughtiest knights—the most practised battle-men of Rome, succumb now to one hundred and fifty hirelings and strangers? Will ye arm for your Tribune? Ye are silent!—be it so. Will you arm for *your own* liberties—*your own* Rome? Silent still! By the saints that reign on the thrones of the heathen gods! are you thus fallen from your birthright? Have you no arms for your own defence? Romans, hear me! Have I wronged you?—if so by *your* hands let me die: and then, with knives yet reeking with my blood, go forward against the robber who is but the herald of your slavery; and I die honoured, grateful, and avenged. You weep! Great God! you weep! Ah, and I could weep, too—that I should live to speak of liberty in vain to Romans—Weep! is this an hour for tears? Weep now, and your tears shall ripen harvests of crime, and licence, and despotism, to come! Romans, arm! follow me at once to the Place of the Colonna: expel this ruffian—expel your enemy (no matter what afterwards you do to me):” he paused; no ardour was kindled by his words—“or,” he con-

tinued, "I abandon you to your fate." There was a long, low, general murmur; at length it became shaped into speech, and many voices cried simultaneously: "The Pope's bull—thou art a man accursed!"

"What!" cried the Tribune; "and is it *ye* who forsake me, ye for whose cause alone man dares to hurl against me the thunders of his God? Is it not for *you* that I am declared heretic and rebel? What are my imputed crimes? That I have *made* Rome and *asserted* Italy to be free; that I have subdued the proud magnates, who were the scourge both of Pope and People. And you—you upbraid me with what I have dared and done for you! Men, *with* you I have fought, *for* you I would have perished. You forsake yourselves in forsaking me, and since I no longer rule over brave men, I resign my power to the tyrant you prefer. Seven months I have ruled over you, prosperous in commerce, stainless in justice—victorious in the field;—I have shown you what Rome could be; and since I abdicate the government ye gave me, when I am gone, strike for your own freedom! It matters nothing who is the chief of a brave and great people. Prove that Rome hath many a Rienzi, but of brighter fortunes."

"I would he had not sought to tax us," said Cecco del Vecchio, who was the very personification of the vulgar feeling: "and that he had beheaded the Barons!"

"Ay!" cried the ex-gravedigger; "but that blessed porphyry vase!"

"And why should we get our throats cut," said Luigi, the butcher, "like my two brothers?—Heaven rest them!"

On the face of the general multitude there was a common expression of irresolution and shame, many wept and groaned, none (save the aforesaid grumblers) *accused*; none upbraided, but none seemed disposed to arm. It was one of those listless panics, those strange fits of indifference and lethargy which often seize upon a people who make liberty a matter of impulse and caprice, to whom it has become a catchword, who have not long enjoyed all its rational, and sound, and practical, and blessed results; who have been affrayed by the storms that herald its dawn;—a people such as is common to the

south ; such as even the north has known ; such as, had Cromwell lived a year longer, even England might have seen ; and, indeed, in some measure, such a reaction from popular enthusiasm to popular indifference England *did* see, when her children madly surrendered the fruits of the bloody war, without reserve, without foresight, to the lewd pensioner of Louis, and the royal murderer of Sydney. To such prostration of soul, such blindness of intellect, even the noblest people will be subjected, when liberty, which should be the growth of ages, spreading its roots through the strata of a thousand customs, is raised, the exotic of an hour, and (like the Tree and Dryad of ancient fable) flourishes and withers with the single spirit that protects it.

“Oh, Heaven, that I were a man !” exclaimed Angelo, who stood behind Rienzi.

“Hear him, hear the boy,” cried the Tribune ; “out of the mouths of babes speaketh wisdom ! He wishes that he were a man, as ye are men, that he might do as ye should do. Mark me,—I ride with these faithful few through the quarter of the Colonna, before the fortress of your foe. Three times before that fortress shall my trumpet sound ; if at the third blast ye come not, armed as befits ye—I say not all, but three, but two, but *one* hundred of ye—I break up my wand of office, and the world shall say one hundred and fifty robbers quelled the soul of Rome, and crushed her magistrate and her laws !”

With those words he descended the stairs, and mounted his charger ; the populace gave way in silence, and their Tribune and his slender train passed slowly on, and gradually vanished from the view of the increasing crowd.

The Romans remained on the place, and after a pause, the demagogue Baroncelli, who saw an opening to his ambition, addressed them. Though not an eloquent nor gifted man, he had the art of uttering the most popular commonplaces. And he knew the weak side of his audience, in their vanity, indolence, and arrogant pride.

“Look you, my masters,” said he, leaping up to the Place of the Lion ; “the Tribune talks bravely—he always did—

but the monkey used the cat for his chestnuts; he wants to thrust your paws into the fire; you will not be so silly as to let him. The saints bless us! But the Tribune, good man, gets a palace and has banquets, and bathes in a porphyry vase—the more shame on him!—in which San Sylvester christened the Emperor Constantine: all this is worth fighting for; but you, my masters, what do *you* get except hard blows, and a stare at a holyday spectacle? Why, if you beat these fellows, you will have another tax on the wine: *that* will be *your* reward!”

“Hark!” cried Cecco, “there sounds the trumpet,—a pity he wanted to tax us!”

“True,” cried Baroncelli, “there sounds the trumpet; a *silver* trumpet, by the Lord! Next week, if you help him out of the scrape, he’ll have a golden one. But go—why don’t you move my friends?—’tis but one hundred and fifty mercenaries. True, they are devils to fight, clad in armour from top to toe; but what then?—if they do cut some four or five hundred throats you’ll beat them at last, and the Tribune will sup the merrier.”

“There sounds the second blast,” said the butcher. “If my old mother had not lost two of us already, ’tis odds, but I’d strike a blow for the bold Tribune.”

“You had better put more quicksilver in you,” continued Baroncelli, “or you will be too late. And what a pity that will be!—if you believe the Tribune, he is the only man that can save Rome. What, you, the finest people in the world—you, not able to save yourselves!—you, bound up with one man—you, not able to dictate to the Colonna and Orsini! Why, who beat the Barons at San Lorenzo? Was it not you? Ah! you got the buffets, and the Tribune the *moneta*! Tush, my friends, let the man go; I warrant there are plenty as good as he to be bought a cheaper bargain. And, hark! there is the third blast; it is too late now!”

As the trumpet from the distance sent forth its long and melancholy note, it was as the last warning of the parting genius of the place; and when silence swallowed up the sound, a gloom fell over the whole assembly. They began to

regret, to repent, when regret and repentance availed no more. The buffoonery of Baroncelli became suddenly displeasing; and the orator had the mortification of seeing his audience disperse in all directions, just as he was about to inform them what great things he himself could do in their behalf.

Meanwhile the Tribune, passing unscathed through the dangerous quarter of the enemy, who, dismayed at his approach, shrank within their fortress, proceeded to the Castle of St. Angelo, whither Nina had already preceded him; and which he entered to find that proud lady with a smile for his safety,—without a tear for his reverse.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUCCESSORS OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION—WHO IS TO BLAME, THE FORSAKEN ONE OR THE FORSAKERS?

CHEERFULLY broke the winter sun over the streets of Rome, as the army of the Barons swept along them. The Cardinal Legate at the head; the old Colonna (no longer haughty and erect, but bowed, and broken-hearted at the loss of his sons) at his right hand;—the sleek smile of Luca Savelli—the black frown of Rinaldo Orsini, were seen close behind. A long but barbarous array it was; made up chiefly of foreign hirelings; nor did the procession resemble the return of exiled citizens, but the march of invading foes.

“My Lord Colonna,” said the Cardinal Legate, a small withered man, by birth a Frenchman, and full of the bitterest prejudices against the Romans, who had in a former mission very ill received him, as was their wont with foreign ecclesiastics; “this Pepin, whom Montreal has deputed at your orders, hath done us indeed good service.”

The old Lord bowed, but made no answer. His strong intellect was already broken, and there was dotage in his glassy eye. The Cardinal muttered, “He hears me not; sorrow

hath brought him to second childhood!" and looking back, motioned to Luca Savelli to approach.

"Luca," said the Legate, "it was fortunate that the Hungarian's black banner detained the Provençal at Aversa. Had he entered Rome, we might have found Rienzi's successor worse than the Tribune himself. "Montreal," he added, with slight emphasis and a curled lip, "is a gentleman, and a Frenchman. This Pepin, who is his delegate, we must bribe, or menace to our will."

"Assuredly," answered Savelli, "it is not a difficult task: for Montreal calculated on a more stubborn contest, which he himself would have found leisure to close——"

"As Podesta, or Prince of Rome! the modest man! We Frenchmen have a due sense of our own merits; but this sudden victory surprises him as it doth us, Luca; and we shall wrest the prey from Pepin ere Montreal can come to his help! But Rienzi must die. He is still, I hear, shut up in St. Angelo. The Orsini shall storm him there ere the day be much older. To-day we possess the Capitol—annul all the rebel's laws—break up his ridiculous parliament, and put all the government of the city under three senators—Rinaldo Orsini, Colonna, and myself; you, my Lord, I trust, we shall fitly provide for."

"Oh! I am rewarded enough by returning to my palace; and a descent on the Jewellers' quarter will soon build up its fortifications. Luca Savelli is not an ambitious man. He wants but to live in peace."

The Cardinal smiled sourly, and took the turn towards the Capitol.

In the front space the usual gapers were assembled. "Make way! make way! knaves!" cried the guards, trampling on either side the crowd, who, accustomed to the sedate and courteous order of Rienzi's guard, fell back too slowly for many of them to escape severe injury from the pikes of the soldiers and the hoofs of the horses. Our friend, Luigi, the butcher, was one of these, and the surliness of the Roman blood was past boiling heat when he received in his ample stomach the blunt end of a German's pike. "There, Roman,"

said the rude mercenary, in his barbarous attempt at Italian, "make way for your betters; you have had enough crowds and shows of late, in all conscience."

"Better!" gulped out the poor butcher; "a Roman has no betters; and if I had not lost two brothers by San Lorenzo, I would——"

"The dog is mutinous," said one of the followers of the Orsini, succeeding the German who had passed on, "and talks of San Lorenzo!"

"Oh!" said another Orsinist, who rode abreast, "I remember him of old. He was one of Rienzi's gang."

"Was he?" said the other, sternly; "then we cannot begin salutary examples too soon;" and, offended at something swaggering and insolent in the butcher's look, the Orsinist coolly thrust him through the heart with his pike, and rode on over his body.

"Shame! Shame!" "Murder! Murder!" cried the crowd: and they began to press, in the passion of the moment, round the fierce guards.

The Legate heard the cry, and saw the rush: he turned pale. "The rascals rebel again!" he faltered.

"No, your Eminence—no," said Luca; "but it may be as well to infuse a wholesome terror; they are all unarmed; let me bid the guards disperse them. A word will do it."

The Cardinal assented; the word was given; and, in a few minutes, the soldiery, who still smarted under the vindictive memory of defeat from an undisciplined multitude, scattered the crowd down the street without scruple or mercy—riding over some, spearing others—filling the air with shrieks and yells, and strewing the ground with almost as many men as a few days before would have sufficed to have guarded Rome, and preserved the constitution! Through this wild, tumultuous scene, and over the bodies of its victims, rode the Legate and his train, to receive in the Hall of the Capitol the allegiance of the citizens, and to proclaim the return of the oppressors.

As they dismounted at the stairs, a placard in large letters struck the eye of the Legate. It was placed upon the pedestal of the Lion of Basalt, covering the very place that had been

occupied by the bull of excommunication. The words were few, and ran thus :

"TREMBLE! RIENZI SHALL RETURN!"

"How! what means this mummerly?" cried the Legate, trembling already, and looking round to the nobles.

"Please your Eminence," said one of the councillors, who had come from the Capitol to meet the Legate, "we saw it at day-break, the ink yet moist, as we entered the Hall. We deemed it best to leave it for your Eminence to deal with."

"*You* deemed! Who are *you*, then?"

"One of the members of the Council, your Eminence, and a stanch opponent of the Tribune, as is well known, when he wanted the new tax——"

"Council—trash! No more councils now! Order is restored at last. The Orsini and the Colonna will look to you in future. Resist a tax, did you? Well, that was right when proposed by a tyrant; but *I* warn you, friend, to take care how you resist the tax *we* shall impose. Happy if your city can buy its peace with the Church on any terms:—and his Holiness is short of the florins."

The discomfited councillor shrank back.

"Tear off yon insolent placard. Nay, hold! fix over it our proclamation of ten thousand florins for the heretic's head! *Ten* thousand? methinks that is too much *now*—we will alter the cypher. Meanwhile Rinaldo Orsini, Lord Senator, march thy soldiers to St. Angelo; let us see if the heretic can stand a siege."

"It needs not, your Eminence," said the councillor, again officiously bustling up; "St. Angelo is surrendered. The Tribune, his wife, and one page, escaped last night, it is said, in disguise."

"Ha!" said the old Colonna, whose dulled sense had at length arrived at the conclusion that something extraordinary arrested the progress of his friends. "What is the matter? What is that placard? Will no one tell me the words? My old eyes are dim."

As he uttered the questions, in the shrill and piercing treble

of age, a voice replied in a loud and deep tone—none knew whence it came; the crowd was reduced to a few stragglers, chiefly friars in cowl and serge, whose curiosity nought could daunt, and whose garb insured them safety—the soldiers closed the rear: a voice, I say, came, startling the colour from many a cheek—in answer to the Colonna, saying:

“TREMBLE! RIENZI SHALL RETURN!”

BOOK VI.

THE PLAGUE.

Erano gli anni della fruttifera Incarnazione del Figliuolo di Dio al numero pervenuti di mille trecento quarant'otto, quando nell' egregia città di Fiorenza oltre ad ogni altra Italica bellissima, pervenne la mortifera pestilenza.—BOCCACCIO, *Introduzione al Decamerone*.

The years of the fructiferous incarnation of the Son of God had reached the number of one thousand three hundred and forty-eight, when into the illustrious city of Florence, beautiful beyond every other in Italy, entered the death-fraught pestilence.—*Introduction to the Decameron*.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETREAT OF THE LOVER.

By the borders of one of the fairest lakes of Northern Italy stood the favourite mansion of Adrian di Castello, to which in his softer and less patriotic moments his imagination had often and fondly turned; and thither the young nobleman, dismissing his more courtly and distinguished companions in the Neapolitan embassy, retired after his ill-starred return to Rome. Most of those thus dismissed joined the Barons; the young Annibaldi, whose daring and ambitious nature had attached him strongly to the Tribune, maintained a neutral ground; he betook himself to his castle in the Campagna, and did not return to Rome till the expulsion of Rienzi.

The retreat of Irene's lover was one well fitted to feed his melancholy reveries. Without being absolutely a fortress, it was sufficiently strong to resist any assault of the mountain

robbers or petty tyrants in the vicinity; while, built by some former lord from the materials of the half-ruined villas of the ancient Romans, its marbled columns and tessellated pavements relieved with a wild grace the grey stone walls and massive towers of feudal masonry. Rising from a green eminence gently sloping to the lake, the stately pile cast its shadow far and dark over the beautiful waters; by its side, from the high and wooded mountains on the background, broke a waterfall, in irregular and sinuous course—now hid by the foliage, now gleaming in the light, and collecting itself at last in a broad basin—beside which a little fountain, inscribed with half-obliterated letters, attested the departed elegance of the classic age—some memento of lord and poet whose very names were lost; thence descending through mosses and lichen, and odorous herbs, a brief, sheeted stream bore its surplus into the lake. And there, amidst the sturdier and bolder foliage of the North, grew, wild and picturesque, many a tree transplanted, in ages back, from the sunnier East; not blighted nor stunted in that golden clime, which fosters almost every produce of nature as with a mother's care. The place was remote and solitary. The roads that conducted to it from the distant towns were tangled, intricate, mountainous, and beset by robbers. A few cottages, and a small convent, a quarter of a league up the verdant margin, were the nearest habitations: and, save by some occasional pilgrim or some bewildered traveller, the loneliness of the mansion was rarely invaded. It was precisely the spot which proffered rest to a man weary of the world, and indulged the memories which grow in rank luxuriance over the wrecks of passion. And he whose mind, at once gentle and self-dependent, can endure solitude, might have ransacked all earth for a more fair and undisturbed retreat.

But not to such a solitude had the earlier dreams of Adrian dedicated the place. Here had he thought—should one bright being have presided—here should love have found its haven: and hither, when love at length admitted of intrusion, hither might wealth and congenial culture have invited all the gentler and better spirits which had begun to move over the troubled face of Italy, promising a second and younger empire of poesy,

and lore, and art. To the graceful and romantic, but somewhat pensive and inert, temperament of the young noble, more adapted to the calm and civilized than stormy and barbarous times, ambition proffered no reward so grateful as lettered leisure and intellectual repose. His youth coloured by the influence of Petrarch, his manhood had dreamed of a happier Vaucluse not untenanted by a Laura. The visions which had connected the scene with the image of Irene made the place still haunted by her shade; and time and absence only ministering to his impassioned meditations, deepened his melancholy and increased his love.

In this lone retreat—which even in describing from memory, for these eyes have seen, these feet have trodden, this heart yet yearneth for, the spot—which even, I say, in thus describing, seems to me (and haply also to the gentle reader) a grateful and welcome transit from the storms of action and the vicissitudes of ambition, so long engrossing the narrative;—in this lone retreat Adrian passed the winter, which visits with so mild a change that intoxicating clime. The roar of the world without was borne but in faint and indistinct murmurings to his ear. He learned only imperfectly, and with many contradictions, the news which broke like a thunderbolt over Italy, that the singular and aspiring man—himself a revolution—who had excited the interest of all Europe, the brightest hopes of the enthusiastic, the profusest adulation of the great, the deepest terror of the despot, the wildest aspirations of all free spirits, had been suddenly stricken from his state, his name branded and his head proscribed. This event, which happened at the end of December, reached Adrian, through a wandering pilgrim, at the commencement of March, somewhat more than two months after the date; the March of that awful year 1348, which saw Europe, and Italy especially, desolated by the direst pestilence which history has recorded, accursed alike by the numbers and the celebrity of its victims, and yet strangely connected with some not unpleasing images by the grace of Boccaccio and the eloquence of Petrarch.

The pilgrim who informed Adrian of the Revolution at Rome was unable to give him any clue to the present fate of Rienzi or

his family. It was only known that the Tribune and his wife had escaped, none knew whither ; many guessed that they were already dead, victims to the numerous robbers who immediately on the fall of the Tribune settled back to their former habits, sparing neither age nor sex, wealth nor poverty. As all relating to the ex-Tribune was matter of eager interest, the pilgrim had also learned that, previous to the fall of Rienzi, his sister had left Rome, but it was not known to what place she had been conveyed.

The news utterly roused Adrian from his dreaming life. Irene was then in the condition his letter dared to picture—severed from her brother, fallen from her rank, desolate and friendless. “Now,” said the generous and high-hearted lover, “she may be mine without a disgrace to my name. Whatever Rienzi’s faults, she is not implicated in them. *Her* hands are not red with my kinsman’s blood ; nor can men say that Adrian di Castello allies himself with a House whose power is built upon the ruins of the Colonnas. The Colonna are restored—again triumphant—Rienzi is nothing—distress and misfortune unite me at once to her on whom they fall !”

But how were these romantic resolutions to be executed—Irene’s dwelling-place unknown ? He resolved himself to repair to Rome and make the necessary inquiries : accordingly he summoned his retainers :—blithe tidings to them, those of travel ! The mail left the armoury—the banner the hall—and after two days of animated bustle, the fountain by which Adrian had passed so many hours of reverie was haunted only by the birds of the returning spring ; and the nightly lamp no longer cast its solitary ray from his turret chamber over the bosom of the deserted lake.

CHAPTER II.

THE SEEKER.

IT was a bright, oppressive, sultry morning, when a solitary norseman was seen winding that unequalled road, from whose height, amidst fig-trees, vines, and olives, the traveller beholds

gradually break upon his gaze the enchanting valley of the Arno, and the spires and domes of Florence. But not with the traveller's customary eye of admiration and delight passed that solitary horseman, and not upon the usual activity, and mirth, and animation of the Tuscan life, broke that noon-day sun. All was silent, void and hushed ; and even in the light of heaven there seemed a sicklied and ghastly glare. The cottages by the road-side were some shut up and closed, some open, but seemingly inmateless. The plough stood still, the distaff plied not : horse and man had a dreary holiday. There was a darker curse upon the land than the curse of Cain ! Now and then a single figure, usually clad in the gloomy robe of a friar, crossed the road, lifting towards the traveller a livid and amazed stare, and then hurried on, and vanished beneath some roof, whence issued a faint and dying moan, which but for the exceeding stillness around could scarcely have pierced the threshold. As the traveller neared the city, the scene became less solitary, yet more dread. There might be seen carts and litters, thick awnings wrapped closely round them, containing those who sought safety in flight, forgetful that the Plague was everywhere ! And while these gloomy vehicles, conducted by horses, gaunt, shadowy skeletons, crawling heavily along, passed by, like hearses of the dead, sometimes a cry burst the silence in which they moved, and the traveller's steed started aside, as some wretch, on whom the disease had broken forth, was dropped from the vehicle by the selfish inhumanity of his comrades, and left to perish by the way. Hard by the gate a waggon paused, and a man with a mask threw out its contents in a green slimy ditch that bordered the road. These were garments and robes of all kind and value ; the brodered mantle of the gallant, the hood and veil of my lady, and the rags of the peasant. While glancing at the labour of the masker, the cavalier beheld a herd of swine, gaunt and half famished, run to the spot in the hopes of food, and the traveller shuddered to think *what* food they might have anticipated ! But ere he reached the gate, those of the animals that had been busiest rooting at the infectious heap, dropped down dead amongst their fellows.¹

¹ The same spectacle greeted, and is recorded by, Boccaccio.

‘Ho, ho,’ said the masker, and his hollow voice sounded yet more hollow through his vizard,—“comest thou here to die, stranger? See, thy brave mantle of triple-pile and golden broidery will not save thee from the gavocciolo.¹ Ride on, ride on;—to-day fit morsel for thy lady’s kiss, to-morrow too foul for the rat and worm!”

Replying not to this hideous welcome, Adrian, for it was he, pursued his way. The gates stood wide open: this was the most appalling sign of all, for, at first, the most jealous precaution had been taken against the ingress of strangers. Now all care, all foresight, all vigilance, were vain. And thrice nine warders had died at that single post, and the officers to appoint their successors were dead too! Law and Police, and the Tribunals of Health, and the Boards of Safety, Death had stopped them all! And the Plague killed art itself, social union, the harmony and mechanism of civilization, as if they had been bone and flesh!

So, mute and solitary, went on the lover, in his quest of love, resolved to find and to save his betrothed, and guided (that faithful and loyal knight!) through the Wilderness of Horror by the blessed hope of that strange passion, noblest of all when noble, basest of all when base! He came into a broad and spacious square lined with palaces, the usual haunt of the best and most graceful nobility of Italy. The stranger was alone now, and the tramp of his gallant steed sounded ghastly and fearful in his own ears, when just as he turned the corner of one of the streets that led from it, he saw a woman steal forth with a child in her arms, while another, yet in infancy, clung to her robe. She held a large bunch of flowers to her nostrils (the fancied and favourite mode to prevent infection), and muttered to the children, who were moaning with hunger,—“Yes, yes, you shall have food! Plenty of food now for the stirring forth. But oh, *that stirring forth!*”—and she peered about and round, lest any of the diseased might be near.

“My friend,” said he, “can you direct me to the convent of——”

“Away, man, away!” shrieked the woman.

¹ The tumour that made the fatal symptom.

"Alas!" said Adrian, with a mournful smile, "can you not see that I am not, as yet, one to *spread* contagion?"

But the woman, unheeding him, fled on; when, after a few paces, she was arrested by the child that clung to her.

"Mother, mother!" it cried, "I am sick—I cannot stir."

The woman halted, tore aside the child's robe, saw under the arm the fatal tumour, and, deserting her own flesh, fled with a shriek along the square. The shriek rang long in Adrian's ears, though not aware of the unnatural cause;—the *mother feared not for her infant, but herself*. The voice of Nature was no more heeded in that charnel city than it is in the tomb itself! Adrian rode on at a brisker pace, and came at length before a stately church; its doors were wide open, and he saw within a company of monks (the church had no other worshippers, and they were masked) gathered round the altar, and chanting the *Miserere Domine*;—the ministers of God, in a city hitherto boasting the devoutest population in Italy, without a flock!

The young Cavalier paused before the door, and waited till the service was done, and the monks descended the steps into the street.

"Holy fathers," said he then, "may I pray your goodness to tell me my nearest way to the convent Santa Maria de' Pazzi?"

"Son," said one of these featureless spectres, for so they seemed in their shroud-like robes, and uncouth vizards,—“son, pass on your way, and God be with you. Robbers or revellers may now fill the holy cloisters you speak of. The abbess is dead; and many a sister sleeps with her. And the nuns have fled from the contagion.”

Adrian half fell from his horse, and, as he still remained rooted to the spot, the dark procession swept on, hymning in solemn dirge through the desolate street the monastic chaunt—

“By the Mother and the Son,
Death endured and mercy won;
Spare us, sinners though we be;
Miserere Domine!”

Recovering from his stupor, Adrian regained the brethren, and, as they closed the burthen of their song, again accosted them.

"Holy fathers, dismiss me not thus. Perchance the one I seek may yet be heard of at the convent. Tell me which way to shape my course."

"Disturb us not, son," said the monk who spoke before. "It is an ill omen for thee to break thus upon the invocations of the ministers of Heaven."

"Pardon, pardon! I will do ample penance, pay many masses; but I seek a dear friend—the way—the way——"

"To the right, till you gain the first bridge. Beyond the third bridge, on the river side, you will find the convent," said another monk, moved by the earnestness of Adrian.

"Bless you, holy father," faltered forth the Cavalier, and spurred his steed in the direction given. The friars heeded him not, but again resumed their dirge. Mingled with the sound of his horse's hoofs on the clattering pavement, came to the rider's ear the imploring line—

"Miserere Domine!"

Impatient, sick at heart, desperate, Adrian flew through the street at the full speed of his horse. He passed the market-place—it was empty as the desert;—the gloomy and barricaded streets, in which the counter cries of Guelf and Ghibeline had so often cheered on the chivalry and rank of Florence. Now huddled together in vault and pit lay Guelf and Ghibeline, knightly spurs and beggar's crutch. To that silence the roar even of civil strife would have been a blessing! The first bridge, the river side, the second, the third bridge, all were gained, and Adrian at last reined his steed before the walls of the convent. He fastened his steed to the porch, in which the door stood ajar, half torn from its hinges, traversed the court, gained the opposite door that admitted to the main building, came to the jealous grating, now no more a barrier from the profane world, and as he there paused a moment to recover breath and nerve, wild laughter and loud song, interrupted and mixed with oaths, startled his ear. He pushed aside the grated door, entered, and, led by the sounds, came to the refectory. In that meeting-place of the severe and mortified maids of Heaven, he now beheld gathered round the upper table, used of

yore by the abbess, a strange, disorderly, ruffian herd, who at first glance seemed indeed of all ranks, for some wore serge, or even rags, others were tricked out in all the bravery of satin and velvet, plume and mantle. But a second glance sufficed to indicate that the companions were much of the same degree, and that the finery of the more showy was but the spoil rent from unguarded palaces or tenantless bazaars ; for under plumed hats, looped with jewels, were grim, unwashed, unshaven faces, over which hung the long locks which the professed brethren of the sharp knife and hireling arm had just begun to assume, serving them often instead of a mask. Amidst these savage revellers were many women, young and middle-aged, foul and fair, and Adrian piously shuddered to see amongst the loose robes and uncovered necks of the professional harlots the saintly habit and beaded rosary of nuns. Flasks of wine, ample viands, gold and silver vessels, mostly consecrated to holy rites, strewed the board. As the young Roman paused spell-bound at the threshold, the man who acted as president of the revel, a huge, swarthy ruffian, with a deep scar over his face, which, traversing the whole of the left cheek and upper lip, gave his large features an aspect preternaturally hideous, called out to him—

“Come in, man—come in! Why stand you there amazed and dumb? We are hospitable revellers, and give all men welcome. Here are wine and women. My Lord Bishop’s wine and my Lady Abbess’s women !

“Sing hey, sing ho, for the royal DEATH,
That scatters a host with a single breath ;
That opens the prison to spoil the palace,
And rids honest necks from the hangman’s malice.
Here’s a health to the Plague ! Let the mighty ones dread,
The poor never lived till the wealthy were dead.
A health to the Plague ! may she ever as now
Loose the rogue from his chain and the nun from her vow :
To the gaoler a sword, to the captive a key,
Hurrah for Earth’s Curse—’tis a blessing to me !”

Ere this fearful stave was concluded, Adrian, sensible that in such orgies there was no chance of prosecuting his inquiries, left the desecrated chamber and fled, scarcely drawing breath, so great was the terror that seized him, till he stood once more in the court amidst the hot, sickly, stagnant sunlight, that seemed a fit atmosphere for the scenes on which it fell. He resolved,

however, not to desert the place without making another effort of inquiry; and while he stood without the court, musing and doubtful, he saw a small chapel hard by, through whose long casement gleamed faintly, and dimmed by the noon-day, the light of tapers. He turned towards its porch, entered, and saw beside the sanctuary a single nun kneeling in prayer. In the narrow aisle, upon a long table (at either end of which burned the tall dismal tapers whose rays had attracted him), the drapery of several shrouds showed him the half-distinct outline of human figures hushed in death. Adrian himself, impressed by the sadness and sanctity of the place, and the touching sight of that solitary and unselfish watcher of the dead, knelt down and intensely prayed.

As he rose, somewhat relieved from the burthen at his heart, the nun rose also, and started to perceive him.

"Unhappy man!" said she, in a voice which, low, faint, and solemn, sounded as a ghost's—"what fatality brings thee hither? Seest thou not thou art in the presence of clay which the Plague hath touched—thou breathest the air which destroys! Hence! and search throughout all the desolation for one spot where the Dark Visitor hath not come!"

"Holy maiden," answered Adrian, "the danger you hazard does not appal me;—I seek one whose life is dearer than my own."

"Thou needest say no more to tell me thou are newly come to Florence! Here son forsakes his father, and mother deserts her child. When life is most hopeless, these worms of a day cling to it as if it were the salvation of immortality! But for me alone death has no horror. Long severed from the world, I have seen my sisterhood perish—the house of God desecrated—its altar overthrown, and I care not to survive,—the last whom the Pestilence leaves at once unperjured and alive."

The nun paused a few moments, and then, looking earnestly at the healthful countenance and unbroken frame of Adrian, sighed heavily—"Stranger, why fly you not?" she said. "Thou mightest as well search the crowded vaults and rotten corruption of the dead, as search the city for one living."

"Sister and bride of the blessed Redeemer!" returned the

Roman, clasping his hands—"one word I implore thee. Thou art, methinks, of the sisterhood of yon dismantled convent; tell me, knowest thou if Irene di Gabrini,¹—guest of the late Abbess, sister of the fallen Tribune of Rome,—be yet amongst the living?"

"Art thou her brother, then?" said the nun. "Art thou that fallen Sun of the Morning?"

"I am her betrothed," replied Adrian, sadly. "Speak."

"Oh, flesh! flesh! how art thou victor to the last, even amidst the triumphs and in the lazar-house of corruption!" said the nun. "Vain man! think not of such carnal ties; make thy peace with Heaven, for thy days are surely numbered!"

"Woman!" cried Adrian, impatiently—"talk not to me of myself, nor rail against ties whose holiness thou canst not know. I ask thee again, as thou thyself hopest for mercy and for pardon, is Irene living?"

The nun was awed by the energy of the young lover, and after a moment, which seemed to him an age of agonised suspense, she replied—

"The maiden thou speakest of died not with the general death. In the dispersion of the few remaining she left the convent—I know not whither; but she had friends in Florence—their names I cannot tell thee."

"Now bless thee, holy sister! bless thee! How long since she left the convent?"

"Four days have passed since the robber and the harlot have seized the house of Santa Maria," replied the nun, groaning: "and they were quick successors to the sisterhood."

"Four days!—and thou canst give me no clue?"

"None—yet stay, young man!"—and the nun, approaching, lowered her voice to a hissing whisper—"Ask the *Becchini*."²

Adrian started aside, crossed himself hastily, and quitted the convent without answer. He returned to his horse, and rode

¹ The family name of Rienzi was Gabrini.

² According to the usual custom of Florence, the dead were borne to their resting-place on biers, supported by citizens of equal rank; but a new trade was created by the plague, and men of the lowest dregs of the populace, bribed by immense payment, discharged the office of transporting the remains of the victims. These were called *Becchini*.

back into the silenced heart of the city. Tavern and hotel there were no more ; but the palaces of dead princes were free to the living stranger. He entered one—a spacious and splendid mansion. In the stables he found forage still in the manger ; but the horses, at that time in the Italian cities a proof of rank as well as wealth, were gone with the hands that fed them. The high-born Knight assumed the office of groom, took off the heavy harness, fastened his steed to the rack, and as the wearied animal, unconscious of the surrounding horrors, fell eagerly upon its meal, its young lord turned away, and muttered, “Faithful servant, and sole companion ! may the pestilence, that spareth neither beast nor man, spare thee ! and mayst thou bear me hence with a lighter heart !”

A spacious hall, hung with arms and banners—a wide flight of marble stairs, whose walls were painted in the stiff outlines and gorgeous colours of the day, conducted to vast chambers, hung with velvets and cloth of gold, but silent as the tomb. He threw himself upon the cushions which were piled in the centre of the room, for he had ridden far that morning, and for many days before, and he was wearied and exhausted, body and limb ; but he could not rest. Impatience, anxiety, hope, and fear, gnawed his heart and fevered his veins, and, after a brief and unsatisfactory attempt to sober his own thoughts, and devise some plan of search more certain than that which chance might afford him, he rose, and traversed the apartments, in the unacknowledged hope which chance alone could suggest.

It was easy to see that he had made his resting-place in the home of one of the princes of the land ; and the splendour of all around him far outshone the barbarous and rude magnificence of the less civilised and wealthy Romans. Here lay the lute as last touched—the gilded and illumined volume as last conned ; there were seats drawn familiarly together, as when lady and gallant had interchanged whispers last.

“And such,” thought Adrian,—“such desolation may soon swallow up the vestige of the unwelcomed guest, as of the vanished lord !”

At length he entered a saloon, in which was a table still spread with wine-flasks, goblets of glass, and one of silver,

withered flowers, half-mouldy fruits, and viands. At one side the arras, folding-doors opened to a broad flight of stairs, that descended to a little garden at the back of the house, in which a fountain still played sparkling and livingly—the only thing, save the stranger, living there! On the steps lay a crimson mantle, and by it a lady's glove. The relics seemed to speak to the lover's heart of a lover's last wooing and last farewell. He groaned aloud, and feeling he should have need of all his strength, filled one of the goblets from a half-emptied flask of Cyprus wine. He drained the draught—it revived him. "Now," he said, "once more to my task!—I will sally forth," when suddenly he heard heavy steps along the rooms he had quitted—they approached—they entered; and Adrian beheld two huge and ill-omened forms stalk into the chamber. They were wrapped in black homely draperies, their arms were bare, and they wore large shapeless masks, which descended to the breast, leaving only access to sight and breath in three small and circular apertures. The Colonna half drew his sword, for the forms and aspects of these visitors were not such as men think to look upon in safety.

"Oh!" said one, "the palace has a new guest to-day. Fear us not, stranger; there is room,—ay, and wealth enough for all men now in Florence! *Per Bacco!* but there is still one goblet of silver left—how comes that?" So saying, the man seized the cup which Adrian had just drained, and thrust it into his breast. He then turned to Adrian, whose hand was still upon his hilt, and said, with a laugh which came choked and muffled through his vizard—"Oh, we cut no throats, Signor; the Invisible spares us that trouble. We are honest men, state officers, and come but to see if the cart should halt here to-night."

"Ye are then——"

"Becchini!"

Adrian's blood ran cold. The Becchino continued—"And keep you this house while you rest at Florence, Signor?"

"Yes, if the rightful lord claim it not."

"Ha! ha! 'Rightful lord!' The Plague is Lord of all now! Why, I have known three gallant companies tenant this palace the last week, and have buried them all—all! It is a

pleasant house enough, and gives good custom. Are you alone?"

"At present, yes."

"Show us where you sleep, that we may know where to come for you. You won't want us these three days, I see."

"Ye are pleasant welcomers!" said Adrian;—"but listen to me. Can ye find the living as well as bury the dead? I seek one in this city who, if you discover her, shall be worth to you a year of burials."

"No, no! that is out of our line. As well look for a dropped sand on the beach, as for a living being amongst closed houses and yawning vaults; but if you will pay the poor grave-diggers beforehand, I promise you, you shall have the first of a new charnel-house:—it will be finished just about your time."

"There!" said Adrian, flinging the wretches a few pieces of gold—"there! and if you would do me a kinder service, leave me, at least while living; or I may save you that trouble." And he turned from the room.

The Becchino who had been spokesman followed him. "You are generous, Signor, stay; you will want fresher food than these filthy fragments. I will supply thee of the best, while—while thou wantest it. And hark,—whom wishest thou that I should seek?"

This question arrested Adrian's departure. He detailed the name, and all the particulars he could suggest of Irene; and, with sickened heart, described the hair, features, and stature of that lovely and hallowed image, which might furnish a theme to the poet, and now gave a clue to the grave-digger.

The unhallowed apparition shook his head when Adrian had concluded. "Full five hundred such descriptions did I hear in the first days of the Plague, when there were still such things as mistress and lover; but it is a dainty catalogue, Signor, and it will be a pride to the poor Becchino to discover or even to bury so many charms! I will do my best; meanwhile I can recommend you, if in a hurry, to make the best of your time, to many a pretty face and comely shape——"

"Out, fiend!" muttered Adrian: "fool to waste time with such as thou!"

The laugh of the grave-digger followed his steps.

All that day did Adrian wander through the city, but search and question were alike unavailing; all whom he encountered and interrogated seemed to regard him as a madman, and these were indeed of no kind likely to advance his object. Wild troops of disordered, drunken revellers, processions of monks, or here and there, scattered individuals gliding rapidly along, and shunning all approach or speech, made the only haunters of the dismal streets, till the sun sank, lurid and yellow, behind the hills, and darkness closed around the noiseless pathway of the Pestilence.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLOWERS AMIDST THE TOMBS.

ADRIAN found that the Becchino had taken care that famine should not forestall the plague; the banquet of the dead was removed, and fresh viands and wines of all kinds,—for there was plenty then in Florence!—spread the table. He partook of the refreshment, though but sparingly, and shrinking from repose in beds beneath whose gorgeous hangings Death had been so lately busy, carefully closed door and window, wrapped himself in his mantle, and found his resting-place on the cushions of the chamber in which he had supped. Fatigue cast him into an unquiet slumber, from which he was suddenly awakened by the roll of a cart below, and the jingle of bells. He listened, as the cart proceeded slowly from door to door, and at length its sound died away in the distance. He slept no more that night!

The sun had not long risen ere he renewed his labours; and it was yet early when, just as he passed a church, two ladies richly dressed came from the porch, and seemed through their vizards to regard the young Cavalier with earnest attention. The gaze arrested him also, when one of the ladies said, "Fair sir, you are over-bold: you wear no mask; neither do you smell to flowers."

"Lady, I wear no mask, for I would be seen : I search these miserable places for one in whose life I live."

"He is young, comely, evidently noble, and the plague hath not touched him : he will serve our purpose well," whispered one of the ladies to the other.

"You echo my own thoughts," returned her companion ; and then turning to Adrian, she said, "You seek one you are not wedded to, if you seek so fondly."

"It is true."

"Young and fair, with dark hair and neck of snow ; I will conduct you to her."

"Signora !"

"Follow us !"

"Know you whom I am, and whom I seek ?"

"Yes."

"Can you in truth tell me aught of Irene ?"

"I can : follow me."

"To her ?"

"Yes, yes : follow us !"

The ladies moved on as if impatient of further parley. Amazed, doubtful, and, as if in a dream, Adrian followed them. Their dress, manner, and the pure Tuscan of the one who had addressed him, indicated them of birth and station ; but all else was a riddle which he could not solve.

They arrived at one of the bridges, where a litter and a servant on horseback holding a palfrey by the bridle were in attendance. The ladies entered the litter, and she who had before spoken bade Adrian follow on the palfrey.

"But tell me——" he began.

"No questions, Cavalier," said she impatiently ; "follow the living in silence, or remain with the dead, as you list."

With that the litter proceeded, and Adrian mounted the palfrey wonderingly, and followed his strange conductors, who moved on at a tolerably brisk pace. They crossed the bridge, left the river on one side, and, soon ascending a gentle acclivity, the trees and flowers of the country began to succeed dull walls and empty streets. After proceeding thus somewhat less than half an hour, they turned up a green lane remote from the road,

and came suddenly upon the porticoes of a fair and stately palace. Here the ladies descended from their litter; and Adrian, who had vainly sought to extract speech from the attendant, also dismounted, and following them across a spacious court, filled on either side with vases of flowers and orange-trees, and then through a wide hall in the farther side of the quadrangle, found himself in one of the loveliest spots eye ever saw or poet ever sung. It was a garden plot of the most emerald verdure, bouquets of laurel and of myrtle opened on either side into vistas half overhung with clematis and rose, through whose arcades the prospect closed with statues and gushing fountains; in front, the lawn was bounded by rows of vases on marble pedestals filled with flowers; and broad and gradual flights of steps of the whitest marble led from terrace to terrace, each adorned with statues and fountains, half way down a high but softly sloping and verdant hill. Beyond, spread in wide, various, and luxurious landscape, the vineyards and olive-groves, the villas and villages, of the Vale of Arno, intersected by the silver river, while the city, in all its calm, but without its horror, raised its roofs and spires to the sun. Birds of every hue and song some free, some in network of golden wire, warbled round; and upon the centre of the sward reclined four ladies unmasked and richly dressed, the eldest of whom seemed scarcely more than twenty; and five cavaliers, young and handsome, whose jewelled vests and golden chains attested their degree. Wines and fruits were on a low table beside; and musical instruments, chess-boards, and gammon-tables, lay scattered all about. So fair a group, and so graceful a scene, Adrian never beheld but once, and that was in the midst of the ghastly pestilence of Italy--such group and such scene our closet indolence may yet revive in the pages of the bright Boccaccio!

On seeing Adrian and his companions approach, the party rose instantly; and one of the ladies, who wore upon her head a wreath of laurel-leaves, stepping before the rest, exclaimed, "Well done, my Mariana! welcome back, my fair subjects. And you, sir, welcome hither."

The two guides of the Colonna had by this time removed their masks; and the one who had accosted him, shaking her

long and raven ringlets over a bright, laughing eye and a cheek to whose native olive now rose a slight blush, turned to him ere he could reply to the welcome he had received.

"Signor Cavalier," said she, "you now see to what I have decoyed you. Own that this is pleasanter than the sights and sounds of the city we have left. You gaze on me in surprise. See, my Queen, how speechless the marvel of your court has made our new gallant; I assure you he could talk quickly enough when he had only us to confer with: nay, I was forced to impose silence on him."

"Oh! then you have not yet informed him of the custom and origin of the court he enters?" quoth she of the laurel wreath.

"No, my Queen; I thought all description given in such a spot as our poor Florence now is would fail of its object. My task is done, I resign him to your Grace!"

So saying the lady tripped lightly away, and began coquetishly sleeking her locks in the smooth mirror of a marble basin, whose waters trickled over the margin upon the grass below, ever and anon glancing archly towards the stranger, and sufficiently at hand to overhear all that was said.

"In the first place, Signor, permit us to inquire," said the lady who bore the appellation of Queen, "thy name, rank, and birth-place."

"Madam," returned Adrian, "I came hither little dreaming to answer questions respecting myself; but what it pleases you to ask, it must please me to reply to. My name is Adrian di Castello, one of the Roman house of the Colonna."

"A noble column of a noble house!" answered the Queen. "For us, respecting whom your curiosity may perhaps be aroused, know that we six ladies of Florence, deserted by or deprived of our kin and protectors, formed the resolution to retire to this palace, where, if death comes, it comes stripped of half its horrors; and as the learned tell us that sadness engenders the awful malady, so you see us sworn foes to sadness. Six cavaliers of our acquaintance agreed to join us. We pass our days, whether many or few, in whatever diversions we can find or invent. Music and the dance, merry tales and

lively songs, with such slight change of scene as from sward to shade, from alley to fountain, fill up our time, and prepare us for peaceful sleep and happy dreams. Each lady is by turns Queen of our fairy court, as is my lot this day. One law forms the code of our constitution—that nothing sad shall be admitted. We would live as if yonder city were not, and as if (added the fair Queen, with a slight sigh) youth, grace, and beauty, could endure for ever. One of our knights madly left us for a day, promising to return; we have seen him no more: we will not guess what hath chanced to him. It became necessary to fill up his place; we drew lots who should seek his substitute; it fell upon the ladies who have—not, I trust, to your displeasure—brought you hither. Fair sir, my explanation is made.”

“Alas, lovely Queen,” said Adrian, wrestling strongly, but vainly, with the bitter disappointment he felt—“I cannot be one of your happy circle; I am in myself a violation of your law. I am filled with but one sad and anxious thought, to which all mirth would seem impiety. I am a seeker amongst the living and the dead for one being of whose fate I am uncertain: and it was only by the words that fell from my fair conductor, that I have been decoyed hither from my mournful task. Suffer me, gracious lady, to return to Florence.”

The Queen looked in mute vexation towards the dark-eyed Mariana, who returned the glance by one equally expressive—and then suddenly stepping up to Adrian she said,—

“But, Signor, if I should still keep my promise, if I should be able to satisfy thee of the health and safety of—of Irene.”

“Irene!” echoed Adrian in surprise, forgetful at the moment that he had before revealed the name of her he sought—“Irene—Irene di Gabrini, sister of the once renowned Rienzi!”

“The same,” replied Mariana, quickly; “I knew her as I told you. Nay, Signor, I do not deceive thee. It is true that I cannot bring thee to her; but better as it is,—she went away many days ago to one of the towns of Lombardy, which, they say, the pestilence has not yet pierced. Now, noble sir, is not your heart lightened? and will you so soon be a deserter from the Court of Loveliness; and perhaps,” she added, with a soft look from her large dark eyes, “of Love?”

"Dare I, in truth, believe you, Lady?" said Adrian, all delighted, yet still half doubting:

"Would I deceive a true lover, as methinks you are? Be assured. Nay, Queen, receive your subject."

The Queen extended her hand to Adrian, and led him to the group that still stood on the grass at a little distance. They welcomed him as a brother, and soon forgave his abstracted courtesies, in compliment to his good mien and illustrious name.

The Queen clapped her hands, and the party again ranged themselves on the sward, each lady beside each gallant. "You, Mariana, if not fatigued," said the Queen, "shall take the lute and silence these noisy grasshoppers, which chirp about us with as much pretension as if they were nightingales. Sing, sweet subject, sing; and let it be the song our dear friend, Signor Visdomini,¹ made for a kind of inaugural anthem to such as we admitted to our court."

Mariana, who had reclined herself by the side of Adrian, took up the lute, and after a short prelude, sang the words thus imperfectly translated:—

THE SONG OF THE FLORENTINE LADY.

Enjoy the more the smiles of noon
If doubtful be the morrow;
And know the Fort of Life is soon
Betrayed to Death by Sorrow!

Death claims us all—then, Grief, away!
We'll own no meaner master;
The clouds that darken round the day
But bring the night the faster.

Love—feast—be merry while on earth,
Such, Grave, should be thy moral!
Ev'n Death himself is friends with Mirth,
And veils the tomb with laurel.²

While gazing on the eyes I love,
New life to mine is given—
If joy the lot of saints above,
Joy fits us best for Heaven.

¹ I know not if this be the same Visdomini who, three years afterwards, with one of the Medici, conducted so gallant a reinforcement to Scarperia, then besieged by Visconti d'Oleggio.

² At that time, in Italy, the laurel was frequently planted over the dead.

To this song, which was much applauded, succeeded those light and witty tales in which the Italian novelists furnished Voltaire and Marmontel with a model—each, in his or her turn, taking up the discourse, and with an equal dexterity avoiding every lugubrious image or mournful reflection that might remind those graceful idlers of the vicinity of Death. At any other time the temper and accomplishments of the young Lord di Castello would have fitted him to enjoy and to shine in that Arcadian Court. But now he in vain sought to dispel the gloom from his brow, and the anxious thought from his heart. He revolved the intelligence he had received, wondered, guessed, hoped, and dreaded still; and if for a moment his mind returned to the scene about him, his nature too truly poetical for the false sentiment of the place, asked itself in what, save the polished exterior and the graceful circumstance, the mirth that he now so reluctantly witnessed differed from the brutal revels in the convent of Santa Maria—each alike in its motive, though so differing in the manner—equally callous and equally selfish, coining horror into enjoyment. The fair Mariana, whose partner had been reft from her, as the Queen had related, was in no mind to lose the new one she had gained. She pressed upon him from time to time the wine-flask and the fruits; and in those unmeaning courtesies her hand gently lingered upon his. At length, the hour arrived when the companions retired to the Palace during the fiercer heats of noon—to come forth again in the declining sun, to sup by the side of the fountain, to dance, to sing, and to make merry by torchlight and the stars till the hour of rest. But Adrian, not willing to continue the entertainment, no sooner found himself in the apartment to which he was conducted than he resolved to effect a silent escape, as under all circumstances the shortest, and not perhaps the least courteous, farewell left to him. Accordingly, when all seemed quiet and hushed in the repose common to the inhabitants of the South during that hour, he left his apartment, descended the stairs, passed the outer court, and was already at the gate, when he heard himself called by a voice that spoke vexation and alarm. He turned to behold Mariana.

“Why, how now, Signor di Castello, is our company so

unpleasing, is our music so jarring, or are our brows so wrinkled, that you should fly as the traveller flies from the witches he surprises at Benevento? Nay, you cannot mean to leave us yet?"

"Fair dame," returned the cavalier, somewhat disconcerted, "it is in vain that I seek to rally my mournful spirits, or to fit myself for the court to which nothing sad should come. Your laws hang about me like a culprit—better timely flight than harsh expulsion."

As he spoke he moved on, and would have passed the gate, but Mariana caught his arm.

"Nay," said she, softly, "are there no eyes of dark light, and no neck of wintry snow, that can compensate to thee for the absent one? Tarry and forget, as doubtless in absence even *thou* art forgotten!"

"Lady," answered Adrian, with great gravity, not unmixed with an ill-suppressed disdain, "I have not sojourned long enough amidst the sights and sounds of woe, to blunt my heart and spirit into callousness to all around. Enjoy, if thou canst, and gather the rank roses of the sepulchre; but to me, haunted still by funeral images, Beauty fails to bring delight, and Love—even *holy* love—seems darkened by the Shadow of Death. Pardon me, and farewell."

"Go, then," said the Florentine, stung and enraged at his coldness; "go and find your mistress amidst the associations on which it pleases your philosophy to dwell. I did but deceive thee, blind fool! as I had hoped for thine own good, when I told thee Irene—(was that her name?)—was gone from Florence, Of her I know nought, and heard nought, save from thee. Go back and search the vault, and see whether thou lovest her still!"

CHAPTER IV.

WE OBTAIN WHAT WE SEEK AND KNOW IT NOT.

IN the fiercest heat of the day, and on foot, Adrian returned to Florence. As he approached the city, all that festive and gallant scene he had quitted seemed to him like a dream; a vision of the gardens and bowers of an enchantress, from which he woke abruptly as a criminal may wake on the morning of his doom to see the scaffold and the deathsman;—so much did each silent and lonely step into the funeral city bring back his bewildered thoughts at once to life and to death. The parting words of Mariana sounded like a knell at his heart. And now as he passed on—the heat of the day, the lurid atmosphere, long fatigue, alternate exhaustion and excitement, combining with the sickness of disappointment, the fretting consciousness of precious moments irretrievably lost, and his utter despair of forming any systematic mode of search—fever began rapidly to burn through his veins. His temples felt oppressed as with the weight of a mountain; his lips parched with intolerable thirst; his strength seemed suddenly to desert him; and it was with pain and labour that he dragged one languid limb after the other.

“I feel it,” thought he, with the loathing nausea and shivering dread with which nature struggles ever against death; “I feel it upon me—the Devouring and the Viewless—I shall perish, and without saving her; nor shall even one grave contain us!”

But these thoughts served rapidly to augment the disease which began to prey upon him; and ere he reached the interior of the city, even thought itself forsook him. The images of men and houses grew indistinct and shadowy before his eyes; the burning pavement became unsteady and reeling beneath his feet; delirium gathered over him, and he went on his way muttering broken and incoherent words; the few who met fled from him in dismay. Even the monks, still continuing their solemn and sad processions, passed with a murmured *bene vobis* to the other side from that on which his steps swerved and

faltered. And from a booth at the corner of a street, four Becchini, drinking together, fixed upon him from their black masks the gaze that vultures fix upon some dying wanderer of the desert. Still he crept on, stretching out his arms like a man in the dark, and seeking with the vague sense that yet struggled against the gathering delirium, to find out the mansion in which he had fixed his home ; though many as fair to live, and as meet to die in, stood with open portals before and beside his path.

"Irene, Irene!" he cried, sometimes in a muttered and low tone, sometimes in a wild and piercing shriek, "where art thou? Where? I come to snatch thee from them; they shall not have thee, the foul and ugly fiends! Pah! how the air smells of dead flesh! Irene, Irene! we will away to mine own palace and the heavenly lake—Irene!"

While thus benighted, and thus exclaiming, two females suddenly emerged from a neighbouring house, masked and mantled.

"Vain wisdom!" said the taller and slighter of the two, whose mantle, it is here necessary to observe, was of a deep blue, richly brodered with silver, of a shape and a colour not common in Florence, but usual in Rome, where the dress of ladies of the higher rank was singularly bright in hue and ample in fold—thus differing from the simpler and more slender draperies of the Tuscan fashion—"Vain wisdom, to fly a relentless and certain doom!"

"Why, thou wouldst not have us hold the same home with three of the dead in the next chamber—strangers too to us—when Florence has so many empty halls? Trust me, we shall not walk far ere we suit ourselves with a safer lodgment."

"Hitherto, indeed, we have been miraculously preserved," sighed the other, whose voice and shape were those of extreme youth; "yet would that we knew where to fly—what mount, what wood, what cavern, held my brother and his faithful Nina! I am sick with horrors!"

"Irene, Irene! Well then, if thou art at Milan or some Lombard town, why do I linger here? To horse, to horse Oh, no! no!—not the horse with the bells! not the death-cart."

With a cry, a shriek, louder than the loudest of the sick man's, broke that young female away from her companion. It seemed as if a single step took her to the side of Adrian. She caught his arm—she looked in his face—she met his unconscious eyes bright with a fearful fire. "It has seized him! (she then said in a deep but calmer tone)—the Plague!"

"Away, away! are you mad?" cried her companion; "hence, hence,—touch me not now thou hast touched him—go!—here we part!"

"Help me to bear him somewhere; see, he faints, he droops, he falls!—help me, dear Signora, for pity, for the love of God!"

But, wholly possessed by the selfish fear which overcame all humanity in that miserable time, the elder woman, though naturally kind, pitiful, and benevolent, fled rapidly away, and soon vanished. Thus left alone with Adrian, who had now, in the fierceness of the fever that preyed within him, fallen on the ground, the strength and nerve of that young girl did not forsake her. She tore off the heavy mantle which encumbered her arms, and cast it from her; and then, lifting up the face of her lover—for who but Irene was that weak woman, thus shrinking not from the contagion of death?—she supported him on her breast, and called aloud and again for help. At length the Becchini in the booth before noticed (hardened in their profession, and who, thus hardened, better than the most cautious, escaped the pestilence), lazily approached—"Quicker, quicker, for Christ's love!" said Irene. "I have much gold: I will reward you well: help me to bear him under the nearest roof."

"Leave him to us, young lady: we have had our eye upon him," said one of the grave-diggers. "We'll do our duty by him, first and last."

"No, no! touch not his head—that is my care. There, I will help you; so,—now then,—but be gentle!"

Assisted by these portentous officers, Irene, who would not release her hold, but seemed to watch over the beloved eyes and lips (set and closed as they were) as if to look back the soul from parting, bore Adrian into a neighbouring house, and laid him on a bed; from which Irene (preserving as only women do, in such time, the presence of mind and vigilant providence which

make so sublime a contrast with their keen susceptibilities) caused them first to cast off the draperies and clothing, which might retain additional infection. She then despatched them for new furniture, and for whatsoever leech money might yet bribe to a duty, now chiefly abandoned to those heroic Brotherhoods who, however vilified in modern judgment by the crimes of some unworthy members, were yet, in the dark times, the best, the bravest, and the holiest agents to whom God ever delegated the power to resist the oppressor—to feed the hungry—to minister to woe; and who, alone, amidst that fiery Pestilence (loosed, as it were, a demon from the abyss, to shiver into atoms all that binds the world to Virtue and to Law), seemed to awaken, as by the sound of an angel's trumpet, to that noblest Chivalry of the Cross—whose faith is the scorn of self—whose hope is beyond the lazar-house—whose feet, already winged for immortality, trample, with a conqueror's march, upon the graves of Death!

While this the ministry and the office of love—along that street in which Adrian and Irene had met at last—came singing, reeling, roaring, the dissolute and abandoned crew who had fixed their quarters in the Convent of Santa Maria de' Pazzi, their bravo chief at their head, and a nun (no longer in nun's garments) upon either arm. "A health to the Plague!" shouted the ruffian: "A health to the Plague!" echoed his frantic Bacchanals.

"A health to the Plague, may she ever as now,
Loose the rogue from his chain and the nun from her vow;
To the gaoler a sword—to the captive a key,
Hurrah for Earth's Curse! 'tis a blessing to me."

"Holla!" cried the chief, stopping; "here, Margherita; here's a brave cloak for thee, my girl: silver enow on it to fill thy purse, if it ever grow empty; which it may, if ever the Plague grow slack."

"Nay," said the girl, who, amidst all the havoc of debauch, retained much of youth and beauty in her form and face, "nay, Guidotto; perhaps it has infection."

"Pooh, child, silver never infects. Clap it on, clap it on. Besides, fate is fate, and when it is thine hour there will be other means besides the *gavocciolo*."

So saying, he seized the mantle, threw it roughly over her shoulders, and dragged her on as before, half pleased with the finery, half frightened with the danger ; while gradually died away, along the lurid air and the mournful streets, the chant of that most miserable mirth.

CHAPTER V.

THE ERROR.

FOR three days, the fatal three days, did Adrian remain bereft of strength and sense. But he was not smitten by the scourge which his devoted and generous nurse had anticipated. It was a fierce and dangerous fever, brought on by the great fatigue, restlessness, and terrible agitation he had undergone.

No professional mediciner could be found to attend him ; but a good friar, better perhaps skilled in the healing art than many who claimed its monopoly, visited him daily. And in the long and frequent absences to which his other and numerous duties compelled the monk, there was one ever at hand to smooth the pillow, to wipe the brow, to listen to the moan, to watch the sleep. And even in that dismal office, when, in the frenzy of the sufferer, her name, coupled with terms of passionate endearment broke from his lips, a thrill of strange pleasure crossed the heart of the betrothed, which she chid as if it were a crime. But even the most unearthly love is selfish in the rapture of being loved ! Words cannot tell, heart cannot divine, the mingled emotions that broke over her when, in some of those incoherent ravings, she dimly understood that *for her* the city had been sought, the death dared, the danger incurred. And as then bending passionately to kiss that burning brow, her tears fell fast over the idol of her youth ; the fountains from which they gushed were those, fathomless and countless, which a life could not weep away. Not an impulse of the human and the woman heart that was not stirred ; the adoring gratitude, the meek wonder thus to *be* loved, while deeming it so simple a merit thus to love ;—as if all sacrifice *in* her were a thing of course,—to her, a

virtue nature could not paragon, words could not repay ! And there he lay, the victim to his own fearless faith, helpless—dependent upon her—a thing between life and death, to thank, to serve—to be proud of, yet protect, to compassionate, yet revere—the saver, to be saved ! Never seemed one object to demand at once from a single heart so many and so profound emotions ; the romantic enthusiasm of the girl—the fond idolatry of the bride—the watchful providence of the mother over her child.

And strange to say, with all the excitement of that lonely watch, scarcely stirring from his side, taking food only that her strength might not fail her,—unable to close her eyes,—though, from the same cause, she would fain have taken rest, when slumber fell upon her charge—with all such wear and tear of frame and heart, she seemed wonderfully supported. And the holy man marvelled, in each visit, to see the cheek of the nurse still fresh, and her eye still bright. In her own superstition she thought and felt that Heaven gifted her with a preternatural power to be true to so sacred a charge ; and in this fancy she did not wholly err :—for Heaven *did* gift her with that diviner power, when it planted in so soft a heart the enduring might and energy of Affection ! The friar had visited the sick man late on the third night, and administered to him a strong sedative. “ This night,” said he to Irene, “ will be the crisis : should he awaken, as I trust he may, with a returning consciousness and a calm pulse, he will live ; if not, young daughter, prepare for the worst. But should you note any turn in the disease, that may excite alarm, or require my attendance, this scroll will inform you where I am, if God spare me still, at each hour of the night and morning.”

The monk retired, and Irene resumed her watch.

The sleep of Adrian was at first broken and interrupted—his features, his exclamations, his gestures, all evinced great agony, whether mental or bodily : it seemed, as perhaps it was, a fierce and doubtful struggle between life and death for the conquest of the sleeper. Patient, silent, breathing but by long-drawn gasps, Irene sate at the bed-head. The lamp was removed to the further end of the chamber, and its ray, shaded

by the draperies, did not suffice to give to her gaze more than the outline of the countenance she watched. In that awful suspense, all the thoughts that hitherto had stirred her mind lay hushed and mute. She was only sensible to that unutterable fear which few of us have been happy enough not to know. That crushing weight under which we can scarcely breathe or move, the avalanche over us, freezing and suspended, which we cannot escape from, beneath which, every moment, we may be buried and overwhelmed. The whole destiny of life was in the chances of that single night! It was just as Adrian at last seemed to glide into a deeper and serener slumber, that the bells of the death-cart broke with their boding knell the palpable silence of the streets. Now hushed, now revived, as the cart stopped for its gloomy passengers, and coming nearer and nearer after every pause. At length she heard the heavy wheels stop under the very casement, and a voice deep and muffled calling aloud, "Bring out the dead!" She rose, and with a noiseless step, passed to secure the door, when the dull lamp gleamed upon the dark and shrouded forms of the Becchini.

"You have not marked the door, nor set out the body," said one gruffly; "but this is the *third night*! He is ready for us."

"Hush, he sleeps—away, quick, it is not the Plague that seized him."

"Not the Plague?" growled the Becchino in a disappointed tone; "I thought no other illness dare encroach upon the rights of the *gavocciolo*!"

"Go—here's money; leave us."

And the grisly carrier sullenly withdrew. The cart moved on, the bell renewed its summons, till slowly and faintly the dreadful larum died in the distance.

Shading the lamp with her hand, Irene stole to the bedside, fearful that the sound and the intrusion had disturbed the slumberer. But his face was still locked, as in a vice, with that iron sleep. He stirred not—the breath scarcely passed his lips—she felt his pulse, as the wan hand lay on the coverlet—there was a slight beat—she was contented—removed the light, and, retiring to a corner of the room, placed the little cross suspended

round her neck upon the table, and prayed, in her intense suffering, to Him who had known death, and who—Son of Heaven though He was, and Sovereign of the Seraphim—had also prayed, in His earthly travail, that the cup might pass away.

The morning broke, not, as in the north, slowly and through shadow, but with the sudden glory with which in those climates day leaps upon earth—like a giant from his sleep. A sudden smile—a burnished glow—and night had vanished. Adrian still slept; not a muscle seemed to have stirred: the sleep was even heavier than before; the silence became a burthen upon the air. Now, in that exceeding torpor so like unto death, the solitary watcher became alarmed and terrified. Time passed—morning glided to noon—still not a sound or motion. The sun was midway in Heaven—the Friar came not. And now again touching Adrian's pulse, she felt no flutter—she gazed on him, appalled and confounded; surely nought living could be so still and pale. "Was it indeed sleep, might it not be——" She turned away sick and frozen; her tongue clove to her lips. Why did the father tarry?—she would go to him—she would learn the worst—she could forbear no longer. She glanced over the scroll the monk had left her: "From sunrise," it said, "I shall be at the convent of the Dominicans. Death has stricken many of the brethren." The convent was at some distance, but she knew the spot, and fear would wing her steps. She gave one wistful look at the sleeper and rushed from the house. "I shall see thee again presently," she murmured. Alas! what hope can calculate beyond the moment? And who shall claim the tenure of "*The Again?*"

It was not many minutes after Irene had left the room, ere, with a long sigh, Adrian opened his eyes—an altered and another man; the fever was gone, the reviving pulse beat low, indeed, but calm. His mind was once more master of his body, and, though weak and feeble, the danger was past, and life and intellect regained.

"I have slept long," he muttered; "and oh, such dreams! And methought I saw Irene, but could not speak to her, and while I attempted to grasp her, her face changed, her form dilated, and I was in the clutch of the foul grave-digger. It

is late—the sun is high—I must be up and stirring. Irene is in Lombardy. No, no; that was a lie, a wicked lie; she is at Florence, I must renew my search.”

As this duty came to his remembrance, he rose from the bed—he was amazed at his own debility: at first he could not stand without support from the wall; by degrees, however, he so far regained the mastery of his limbs as to walk, though with effort and pain. A ravening hunger preyed upon him, he found some scanty and light food in the chamber, which he devoured eagerly. And with scarce less eagerness laved his enfeebled form and haggard face with the water that stood at hand. He now felt refreshed and invigorated, and began to indue his garments, which he found thrown on a heap beside the bed. He gazed with surprise and a kind of self-compassion upon his emaciated hands and shrunken limbs, and began now to comprehend that he must have had some severe but unconscious illness. “Alone, too,” thought he; “no one here to tend me! Nature my only nurse! But alas! alas! how long a time may thus have been wasted, and my adored Irene—quick, quick, not a moment more will I lose.”

He soon found himself in the open street; the air revived him; and that morning had sprung up the blessed breeze, the first known for weeks. He wandered on very slowly and feebly till he came to a broad square, from which, in the vista, might be seen one of the principal gates of Florence, and the fig-trees and olive-groves beyond. It was then that a Pilgrim of tall stature approached towards him as from the gate; his hood was thrown back, and gave to view a countenance of great but sad command; a face, in whose high features, massive brow, and proud, unshrinking gaze, shaded by an expression of melancholy more stern than soft, Nature seemed to have written majesty, and Fate disaster. As in that silent and dreary place, these two, the only tenants of the street, now encountered, Adrian stopped abruptly, and said in a startled and doubting voice: “Do I dream still, or do I behold Rienzi?”

The Pilgrim paused also, as he heard the name, and gazing long on the attenuated features of the young lord, said: “I am he that was Rienzi! and you, pale shadow, is it in this grave

of Italy that I meet with the gay and high Colonna? Alas! young friend," he added, in a more relaxed and kindly voice, "hath the Plague not spared the flower of the Roman nobles? Come, I, the cruel and the harsh Tribune, *I* will be thy nurse: he who might have been my brother, shall yet claim from me a brother's care."

With these words, he wound his arm tenderly round Adrian; and the young noble, touched by his compassion, and agitated by the surprise, leaned upon Rienzi's breast in silence.

"Poor youth," resumed the Tribune, for so, since rather fallen than deposed, he may yet be called; "I ever loved the young, (my brother died young;) and you more than most. What fatality brought thee hither?"

"Irene!" replied Adrian, falteringly.

"Is it so, really? Art thou a Colonna, and yet prize the fallen? The same duty has brought me also to the city of Death. From the furthest south—over the mountains of the robber—through the fastnesses of my foes—through towns in which the herald proclaimed in my ear the price of my head—I have passed hither, on foot and alone, safe under the wings of the Almighty One. Young man, thou shouldst have left this task to one who bears a wizard's life, and whom Heaven and Earth yet reserve for an appointed end!"

The Tribune said this in a deep and inward voice; and in his raised eye and solemn brow might be seen how much his reverses had deepened his fanaticism, and added even to the sanguineness of his hopes.

"But," asked Adrian, withdrawing gently from Rienzi's arm, "thou knowest, then, where Irene is to be found; let us go together. Lose not a moment in this talk; time is of inestimable value, and a moment in this city is often but the border to eternity."

"Right," said Rienzi, awakening to his object. "But fear not, *I have dreamt* that I shall save her, the gem and darling of my house. Fear not, *I* have no fear."

"Know you where to seek?" said Adrian, impatiently; "the Convent holds far other guests."

"Ha! so said my dream!"

"Talk not now of dreams," said the lover; "but if you have no other guide, let us part at once in quest of her. I will take yonder street, you take the opposite, and at sunset let us meet in the same spot."

"Rash man!" said the Tribune, with great solemnity; "scoff not at the visions which Heaven makes a parable to its Chosen. Thou seekest counsel of thy human wisdom; I, less presumptuous, follow the hand of the mysterious Providence, moving even now before my gaze as a pillar of light through the wilderness of dread. Ay, meet me here at sunset, and prove whose guide is the most unerring. If my dream tell me true, I shall see my sister living, ere the sun reach yonder hill, and by a church dedicated to St. Mark."

The grave earnestness with which Rienzi spoke impressed Adrian with a hope which his reason would not acknowledge. He saw him depart with that proud and stately step to which his sweeping garments gave a yet more imposing dignity, and then passed up the street to the right hand. He had not got half way when he felt himself pulled by the mantle. He turned, and saw the shapeless mask of a Becchino.

"I feared you were sped, and that another had cheated me of my office," said the grave-digger, "seeing that you returned not to the old Prince's palace. You don't know me from the rest of us I see, but I am the one you told to seek——"

"Irene!"

"Yes, Irene di Gabrini; you promised ample reward."

"You shall have it."

"Follow me."

The Becchino strode on, and soon arrived at a mansion. He knocked twice at the porter's entrance, an old woman cautiously opened the door. "Fear not, good aunt," said the grave-digger, "this is the young Lord I spoke to thee of. Thou sayest thou hadst two ladies in the palace, who alone survived of all the lodgers, and their names were Bianca de Medici, and—what was the other?"

"Irene di Gabrini, a Roman lady. But I told thee this was the fourth day they left the house, terrified by the deaths within it."

"Thou didst so: and was there anything remarkable in the dress of the Signora di Gabrini?"

"Yes, I have told thee: a blue mantle, such as I have rarely seen, wrought with silver."

"Was the broidery that of stars, silver stars," exclaimed Adrian, "with a sun in the centre?"

"It was."

"Alas! alas! the arms of the Tribune's family! I remember how I praised the mantle the first day she wore it—the day on which we were betrothed!" And the lover at once conjectured the secret sentiment which had induced Irene to retain thus carefully a robe so endeared by association.

"You know no more of your lodgers?"

"Nothing."

"And is this all you have learned, knave?" cried Adrian.

"Patience. I must bring you from proof to proof, and link to link, in order to win my reward. Follow, Signor."

The Becchino, then passing through the several lanes and streets, arrived at another house of less magnificent size and architecture. Again he tapped thrice at the parlour door, and this time came forth a man withered, old, and palsied, whom death seemed to disdain to strike.

"Signor Astuccio," said the Becchino, "pardon me; but I told thee I might trouble thee again. This is the gentleman who wants to know what is often best unknown—but that's not my affair. Did a lady—young and beautiful—with dark hair, and of a slender form, enter this house, stricken with the first symptom of the Plague, three days since?"

"Ay, thou knowest that well enough; and thou knowest, still better, that she has departed these two days: it was quick work with her, quicker than with most!"

"Did she wear anything remarkable?"

"Yes, troublesome man: a blue cloak, with stars of silver."

"Couldst thou guess aught of her previous circumstances?"

"No, save that she raved much about the nunnery of Santa Maria de' Pazzi, and bravos, and sacrilege."

"Are you satisfied, Signor?" asked the grave-digger, with an

air of triumph, turning to Adrian. "But no, I will satisfy thee better, if thou hast courage. Wilt thou follow?"

"I comprehend thee; lead on. Courage! What is there on earth now to fear?"

Muttering to himself, "Ay, leave me alone. I have a head worth something; I ask no gentleman to go by my word; I will make his own eyes the judge of what my trouble is worth," the grave-digger now led the way through one of the gates a little out of the city. And here, under a shed, sat six of his ghastly and ill-omened brethren, with spades and pickaxes at their feet.

His guide now turned round to Adrian, whose face was set, and resolute in despair.

"Fair Signor," said he, with some touch of lingering compassion, "wouldst thou really convince thine own eyes and heart?—the sight may appal, the contagion may destroy, thee,—if, indeed, as it seems to me, Death has not already written '*mine*' upon thee."

"Raven of bode and woe!" answered Adrian, "seest thou not that all I shrink from is thy voice and aspect? Show me her I seek, living or dead."

"I will show her to you, then," said the Becchino, sullenly, "such as two nights since she was committed to my charge. Line and lineament may already be swept away, for the Plague hath a rapid besom; but I have left that upon her by which you will know the Becchino is no liar. Bring hither the torches, comrades, and lift the door. Never stare; it's the gentleman's whim, and he'll pay it well."

Turning to the right, while Adrian mechanically followed his conductors, a spectacle whose dire philosophy crushes as with a wheel all the pride of mortal man—the spectacle of that vault in which earth hides all that on earth flourished, rejoiced, exulted—awaited his eye!

The Becchini lifted a ponderous grate, lowered their torches (scarcely needed, for through the aperture rushed, with a hideous glare, the light of the burning sun), and motioned to Adrian to advance. He stood upon the summit of the abyss and gazed below.



It was a large deep and circular space, like the bottom of an exhausted well. In niches cut into the walls of earth around lay, duly coffined, those who had been the earliest victims of the plague, when the Becchino's market was not yet glutted, and priest followed, and friend mourned the dead. But on the floor below, *there* was the loathsome horror! Huddled and matted together—some naked, some in shrouds already black and rotten—lay the later guests, the unshriven and unblest! The torches, the sun, streamed broad and red over Corruption in all its stages, from the pale blue tint and swollen shape, to the moistened undistinguishable mass, or the riddled bones, where yet clung, in strips and tatters, the black and mangled flesh. In many, the face remained almost perfect, while the rest of the body was but bone: the long hair, the human face, surmounting the grisly skeleton. There was the infant, still on the mother's breast; there was the lover, stretched across the dainty limbs of his adored! The rats (for they clustered in numbers to that feast), disturbed, not scared, sate up from their horrid meal as the light glimmered over them, and thousands of them lay round, stark, and dead, poisoned by that they fed on! There, too, the wild satire of the grave-diggers had cast, though stripped of their gold and jewels, the emblems that spoke of departed rank;—the broken wand of the Councillor; the General's *bâton*; the Priestly Mitre! The foul and livid exhalations gathered like flesh itself, fungous and putrid, upon the walls, and the¹—

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But who shall detail the ineffable and unimaginable horrors that reigned over the Palace where the Great King received the prisoners whom the sword of the Pestilence had subdued?

But through all that crowded court—crowded with beauty and with birth, with the strength of the young and the honours of the old, and the valour of the brave, and the wisdom of the learned, and the wit of the scorner, and the piety of the faithful—one only figure attracted Adrian's eye. Apart from the rest, a late

¹ The description in the text is borrowed from the famous waxwork model (of the interior of the Charnel-house) at Florence.

comer—the long locks streaming far and dark over arm and breast—lay a female, the face turned partially aside, the little seen not recognisable even by the mother of the dead,—but wrapped round in that fatal mantle, on which, though blackened and tarnished, was yet visible the starry heraldry assumed by those who claimed the name of the proud Tribune of Rome. Adrian saw no more—he fell back in the arms of the grave-diggers: when he recovered, he was still without the gates of Florence—reclined upon a green mound—his guide stood beside him—holding his steed by the bridle as it grazed patiently on the neglected grass. The other brethren of the axe had resumed their seat under the shed.

“So, you have revived! Ah! I thought it was only the effluvia; few stand it as we do. And so, as your search is over, deeming you would now be quitting Florence if you have any sense left to you, I went for your good horse. I have fed him since your departure from the palace. Indeed I fancied he would be my perquisite, but there are plenty as good. Come, young sir, mount. I feel a pity for you, I know not why, except that you are the only one I have met for weeks who seem to care for another more than for yourself. I hope you are satisfied now that I showed some brains, eh! in your service: and as I have kept my promise, you’ll keep yours.”

“Friend,” said Adrian, “here is gold enough to make thee rich; here, too, is a jewel that merchants will tell thee princes might vie to purchase. Thou seemest honest, despite thy calling, or thou mightest have robbed and murdered me long since. Do me one favour more.”

“By my poor mother’s soul, yes.”

“Take yon—yon clay from that fearful place. Inter it in some quiet and remote spot—apart—alone! You promise me?—you swear it?—it is well! And now help me on my horse. Farewell Italy, and if I die not with this stroke, may I die as befits at once honour and despair—with trumpet and banner round me—in a well-fought field against a worthy foe! Save a knightly death, nothing is left to live for!”

BOOK VII.

THE PRISON.

Fu rinchiuso in una torre grossa e larga ; avea libri assai, suo Tito Livio, sue storie di Roma, la Bibbia, &c.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. c. 13.

He was immured in a high and spacious tower ; he had books enough, his Titus Livius, his histories of Rome, the Bible, &c.

CHAPTER I.

AVIGNON.—THE TWO PAGES.—THE STRANGER BEAUTY.

THERE is this difference between the Drama of Shakspeare, and that of almost every other master of the same art ; that in the first, the catastrophe is rarely produced by one single cause—one simple and continuous chain of events. Various and complicated agencies work out the final end. Unfettered by the rules of time and place, each time, each place depicted, presents us with its appropriate change of action, or of actors. Sometimes the interest seems to halt, to turn aside, to bring us unawares upon objects hitherto unnoticed, or upon qualities of the characters hitherto hinted at, not developed. But, in reality, the pause in the action is but to collect, to gather up, and to grasp, all the varieties of circumstance that conduce to the Great Result : and the art of fiction is only deserted for the fidelity of history. Whoever seeks to place before the world the true representation of a man's life and times, and enlarging the Dramatic into the Epic, extends his narrative over the vicissitudes

of years, will find himself unconsciously, in this, the imitator of Shakspeare. New characters, each conducive to the end—new scenes, each leading to the last, rise before him as he proceeds, sometimes seeming to the reader to delay, even while they advance, the dread catastrophe. The sacrificial procession sweeps along, swelled by new comers, losing many that first joined it; before, at last, the same as a whole, but differing in its components, the crowd reached the fated bourn of the Altar and the Victim!

It is five years after the date of the events I have recorded, and my story conveys us to the Papal Court at Avignon—that tranquil seat of power, to which the successors of St. Peter had transplanted the luxury, the pomp, and the vices of the Imperial City. Secure from the fraud of violence of a powerful and barbarous nobility, the courtiers of the See surrendered themselves to a holyday of delight—their repose was devoted to enjoyment, and Avignon presented, at that day, perhaps the gayest and most voluptuous society of Europe. The elegance of Clement VI. had diffused an air of literary refinement over the grosser pleasures of the place, and the spirit of Petrarch still continued to work its way through the councils of faction and the orgies of debauch.

Innocent VI. had lately succeeded Clement, and whatever his own claims to learning,¹ he, at least, appreciated knowledge and intellect in others; so that the graceful pedantry of the time continued to mix itself with the pursuit of pleasure. The corruption which reigned through the whole place was too confirmed to yield to the example of Innocent, himself a man of simple habits and exemplary life. Though, like his predecessor, obedient to the policy of France, Innocent possessed a hard and an extended ambition. Deeply concerned for the interests of the Church, he formed the project of confirming and re-establishing her shaken dominion in Italy; and he regarded the tyrants of the various states as the principal obstacles to his ecclesiastical ambition. Nor was this the

¹ Matteo Villani (lib. iii. cap. 44) says that Innocent VI. had not much pretension to learning. He is reported, however, by other authorities, cited by Zefirino Re, to have been "eccellente canonista." He had been a professor in the University of Toulouse.

policy of Innocent VI. alone. With such exceptions as peculiar circumstances necessarily occasioned, the Papal See was, upon the whole, friendly to the political liberties of Italy. The Republics of the Middle Ages grew up under the shadow of the Church ; and there, as elsewhere, it was found, contrary to a vulgar opinion, that Religion, however prostituted and perverted, served for the general protection of civil freedom, —raised the lowly, and resisted the oppressor.

At this period there appeared at Avignon a lady of singular and matchless beauty. She had come with a slender but well appointed retinue from Florence, but declared herself of Neapolitan birth ; the widow of a noble of the brilliant court of the unfortunate Jane. Her name was Cesarini. Arrived at a place where, even in the citadel of Christianity, Venus retained her ancient empire, where Love made the prime business of life, and to be beautiful was to be of power ; the Signora Cesarini had scarcely appeared in public before she saw at her feet half the rank and gallantry of Avignon. Her female attendants were beset with bribes and billets ; and nightly, beneath her lattice, was heard the plaintive serenade. She entered largely into the gay dissipation of the town, and her charms shared the celebrity of the hour with the verse of Petrarch. But though she frowned on none, none could claim the monopoly of her smiles. Her fair fame was as yet unblemished ; but if any might presume beyond the rest, she seemed to have selected rather from ambition than love, and Giles, the warlike Cardinal d'Albornoz, all powerful at the sacred court, already foreboded the hour of his triumph.

It was late noon, and in the ante-chamber of the fair Signora waited two of that fraternity of pages, fair and richly clad, who, at that day, furnished the favourite attendants to rank of either sex.

"By my troth," cried one of these young servitors, pushing from him the dice with which himself and his companion had sought to beguile their leisure, "this is but dull work ! and the best part of the day is gone. Our lady is late."

"And I have donned my new velvet mantle," replied the other, compassionately eying his finery.

"Chut, Giacomo," said his comrade, yawning; "a truce with thy conceit.—What news abroad, I wonder? Has his Holiness come to his senses yet?"

"His senses; what, is he mad then?" quoth Giacomo, in a serious and astonished whisper.

"I think he is; if, being Pope, he does not discover that he may at length lay aside mask and hood. 'Continent Cardinal—lewd Pope,' is the old motto, you know; something must be the matter with the good man's brain if he continue to live like a hermit."

"Oh, I have you! but faith, his Holiness has proxies eno'. The bishops take care to prevent women, Heaven bless them! going out of fashion; and Albornoze does not maintain your proverb, touching the Cardinals."

"True, but Giles is a warrior,—a cardinal in the church, but a soldier in the city."

"Will he carry the fort here, think you, Angelo?"

"Why, fort is female, but——"

"But what?"

"The Signora's brow is made for power, rather than love, fair as it is. She sees in Albornoze the prince, and not the lover. With what a step she sweeps the floor! it disdains even the cloth of gold!"

"Hark!" cried Giacomo, hastening to the lattice, "hear you: the hoofs below? Ah, a gallant company!"

"Returned from hawking," answered Angelo, regarding wistfully the cavalcade, as it swept the narrow street. "Plumes waving, steeds curveting—see how yon handsome cavalier presses close to that dame!"

"His mantle is the colour of mine," sighed Giacomo.

As the gay procession paced slowly on, till hidden by the winding street, and as the sound of laughter and the tramp of horses was yet faintly heard, there frowned right before the straining gaze of the pages, a dark massive tower of the mighty masonry of the eleventh century: the sun gleamed sadly on its vast and dismal surface, which was only here and there relieved by loopholes and narrow slits, rather than casements. It was a striking contrast to the gaiety around, the glittering shops,

and the gaudy train that had just filled the space below. This contrast the young men seemed involuntarily to feel; they drew back, and looked at each other.

"I know your thoughts, Giacomo," said Angelo, the handsomer and elder of the two. "You think yon tower affords but a gloomy lodgment?"

"And I thank my stars that made me not high enough to require so grand a cage," rejoined Giacomo.

"Yet," observed Angelo, "it holds one, who in birth was not our superior."

"Do tell me something of that strange man," said Giacomo regaining his seat; "you are Roman and should know."

"Yes!" answered Angelo, haughtily drawing himself up. "I *am* Roman! and I should be unworthy my birth, if I had not already learned what honour is due to the name of Cola di Rienzi."

"Yet your fellow-Romans nearly stoned him, I fancy," muttered Giacomo. "Honour seems to lie more in kicks than money. Can you tell me," continued the page in a louder key, "can you tell me if it be true, that Rienzi appeared at Prague before the Emperor, and prophesied that the late Pope and all the Cardinals should be murdered, and a new Italian Pope elected, who should endue the Emperor with a golden crown, as Sovereign of Sicilia, Calabria, and Apulia,¹ and himself with a crown of silver, as King of Rome, and all Italy? And ——"

"Hush!" interrupted Angelo, impatiently. "Listen to me, and you shall know the exact story. On *last* leaving Rome (thou knowest that, after his fall, he was present at the Jubilee in disguise) the Tribune——" here Angelo, pausing, looked round, and then with a flushed cheek and raised voice resumed, "Yes, the *Tribune*, that *was* and *shall* be—travelled in disguise, as a pilgrim, over mountain and forest, night and day, exposed to rain and storm, no shelter but the cave,—he who had been, they say, the very spoilt one of Luxury. Arrived at length in Bohemia, he disclosed himself to a Florentine in Prague, and through his aid obtained audience of the Emperor Charles."

¹ An absurd fable, adopted by certain historians.

"A prudent man, the Emperor!" said Giacomo, "close-fisted as a miser. He makes conquests by bargain, and goes to market for laurels,—as I have heard my brother say, who was under him."

"True; but I have also heard that he likes bookmen and scholars—is wise and temperate, and much is yet hoped from him in Italy! Before the Emperor, I say, came Rienzi. 'Know, great Prince,' said he, 'that I am that Rienzi to whom God gave to govern Rome, in peace, with justice, and to freedom. I curbed the nobles, I purged corruption, I amended law. The powerful persecuted me—pride and envy have chased me from my dominions. Great as you are, fallen as I am, I too have wielded the sceptre and might have worn a crown. Know, too, that I am illegitimately of your lineage; my father the son of Henry VII.;¹ the blood of the Teuton rolls in my veins; mean as were my earlier fortunes and humble my earlier name! From you, O king, I seek protection and I demand justice.'²

"A bold speech, and one from equal to equal," said Giacomo; "surely you swell us out the words."

"Not a whit; they were written down by the Emperor's scribe, and every Roman who has once heard knows them by heart: once every Roman was the equal to a king, and Rienzi maintained our dignity in asserting his own."

Giacomo, who discreetly avoided quarrels, knew the weak side of his friend; and though in his heart he thought the Romans as good-for-nothing a set of turbulent dastards as all Italy might furnish, he merely picked a straw from his mantle, and said, in rather an impatient tone, "Humph! proceed! did the Emperor dismiss him?"

"Not so: Charles was struck with his bearing and his spirit, received him graciously, and entertained him hospitably. He remained some time at Prague, and astonished all the learned with his knowledge and eloquence."³

¹ Uncle to the Emperor Charles.

² See, for this speech, the *Anonymous Biographer*, lib. ii. cap. 12.

³ His Italian contemporary delights in representing this remarkable man as another Crichton. "Disputava," he says of him when at Prague, "disputava con Mastri di teologia; molto diceva, parlava cose meravigliose . . . abbair fea ogni persona."—"He disputed with Masters of theology—he spoke much, he discoursed things wonderful—he astonished every one."

"But if so honoured at Prague, how comes he a prisoner at Avignon?"

"Giacomo," said Angelo, thoughtfully, "there are some men whom we, of another mind and mould, can rarely comprehend, and never fathom. And of such men I have observed that a supreme confidence in their own fortunes or their own souls, is the most common feature. Thus impressed, and thus buoyed, they rush into danger with a seeming madness, and from danger soar to greatness, or sink to death. So with Rienzi; dissatisfied with empty courtesies and weary of playing the pedant, since once he had played the prince;—some say of his own accord, (though others relate that he was surrendered to the Pope's legate by Charles,) he left the Emperor's court, and without arms, without money, betook himself at once to Avignon!"

"Madness indeed!"

"Yet, perhaps, his only course, under all circumstances," resumed the elder page. "Once before his fall, and once during his absence from Rome, he had been excommunicated by the Pope's legate. He was accused of heresy—the ban was still on him. It was necessary that he should clear himself. How was the poor exile to do so? No powerful friend stood up for the friend of the people. No courtier vindicated one who had trampled on the neck of the nobles. His own genius was his only friend; on that only could he rely. He sought Avignon, to free himself from the accusations against him; and, doubtless, he hoped that there was but one step from his acquittal to his restoration. Besides, it is certain that the Emperor had been applied to formally to surrender Rienzi. He had the choice before him; for to that sooner or later it must come—to go free, or to go in bonds—as a criminal, or as a Roman. He chose the latter. Wherever he passed along, the people rose in every town, in every hamlet. The name of the great Tribune was honoured throughout all Italy. They besought him not to rush into the very den of peril—they implored him to save himself for that country which he had sought to raise. 'I go to vindicate myself, and to triumph,' was the Tribune's answer. Solemn honours were paid him in the cities through which he

passed;¹ and I am told that never ambassador, prince, or baron, entered Avignon with so long a train as that which followed into these very walls the steps of Cola di Rienzi."

"And on his arrival?"

"He demanded an audience, that he might refute the charges against him. He flung down the gage to the proud cardinals who had excommunicated him. He besought a trial."

"And what said the Pope?"

"Nothing—by word. Yon tower was his answer!"

"A rough one!"

"But there have been longer roads than that from the prison to the palace, and God made not men like Rienzi for the dungeon and the chain."

As Angelo said this with a loud voice, and with all the enthusiasm with which the fame of the fallen Tribune had inspired the youth of Rome, he heard a sigh behind him. He turned in some confusion, and at the door which admitted to the chamber occupied by the Signora Cesarini, stood a female of noble presence. Attired in the richest garments, gold and gems were dull to the lustre of her dark eyes, and as she now stood, erect and commanding, never seemed brow more made for the regal crown—never did human beauty more fully consummate the ideal of a heroine and a queen.

"Pardon me, Signora," said Angelo, hesitatingly; "I spoke loud, I disturbed you; but I am Roman, and my theme was——"

"Rienzi!" said the lady approaching; "a fit one to stir a Roman heart. Nay—no excuses: they would sound ill on thy generous lips. Ah, if—" the Signora paused suddenly, and sighed again; then in an altered and graver tone she resumed—"If fate restore Rienzi to his proper fortunes, he shall know what thou deemest of him."

"If you, lady, who are of Naples," said Angelo, with meaning emphasis, "speak thus of a fallen exile, what must I have felt who acknowledged a sovereign?"

"Rienzi is not of Rome alone—he is of Italy—of the world,"

¹ "Per tutto la via li furo fatti solemni onori," &c.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii, cap. 13.

returned the Signora. "And you, Angelo, who have had the boldness to speak thus of one fallen, have proved with what loyalty you can serve those who have the fortune to own you."

As she spoke, the Signora looked at the page's downcast and blushing face long and wistfully, with the gaze of one accustomed to read the soul in the countenance.

"Men are often deceived," said she, sadly, yet with a half smile; "but women rarely,—save in love. Would that Rome were filled with such as you! Enough! Hark! Is that the sound of hoofs in the court below?"

"Madam," said Giacomo, bringing his mantle gallantly over his shoulder, "I see the servitors of Monsignore the Cardinal d'Albornoz.—It is the Cardinal himself."

"It is well!" said the Signora, with a brightening eye; "I await him!" With these words she withdrew by the door through which she had surprised the Roman page.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHARACTER OF A WARRIOR-PRIEST—AN INTERVIEW—THE INTRIGUE AND COUNTER-INTRIGUE OF COURTS.

GILES, (or Egidio,¹) Cardinal d'Albornoz, was one of the most remarkable men of that remarkable time, so prodigal of genius. Boasting his descent from the royal houses of Arragon and Leon, he had early entered the Church, and yet almost a youth, attained the archbishopric of Toledo. But no peaceful career, however brilliant, sufficed to his ambition. He could not content himself with the honours of the Church, unless they were the honours of a Church militant. In the war against the Moors, no Spaniard had more highly distinguished himself; and Alphonso XI., king of Castile, had insisted on receiving from the hand of the martial priest the badge of knighthood. After the death of Alphonso, who was strongly attached to him, Albornoz repaired to Avignon,

¹ Egidio is the proper Italian equivalent to the French name Gilles—but the Cardinal is generally called, by the writers of that day, Gilio d'Albornoz.

and obtained from Clement VI. the cardinal's hat. With Innocent he continued in high favour, and now, constantly in the councils of the Pope, rumours of warlike preparation, under the banners of Alborno, for the recovery of the papal dominions from the various tyrants that usurped them, were already circulated through the court.¹ Bold, sagacious, enterprising, and cold-hearted,—with the valour of the knight, and the cunning of the priest,—such was the character of Giles, Cardinal d'Alborno.

Leaving his attendant gentlemen in the antechamber, Alborno was ushered into the apartment of the Signora Cesarini. In person, the Cardinal was about the middle height; the dark complexion of Spain had faded by thought, and the wear of ambitious schemes, into a sallow but hardy hue; his brow was deeply furrowed, and though not yet passed the prime of life, Alborno might seem to have entered age, but for the firmness of his step, the slender elasticity of his frame, and an eye which had acquired calmness and depth from thought, without losing any of the brilliancy of youth.

"Beautiful Signora," said the Cardinal, bending over the hand of the Cesarini with a grace which betokened more of the prince than of the priest, "the commands of his Holiness have detained me, I fear, beyond the hour in which you vouchsafed to appoint my homage, but my heart has been with you since we parted."

"The Cardinal d'Alborno," replied the Signora, gently withdrawing her hand, and seating herself, "has so many demands on his time, from the duties of his rank and renown, that methinks to divert his attention for a few moments to less noble thoughts is a kind of treason to his fame."

"Ah, lady," replied the Cardinal, "never was my ambition so nobly directed as it is now. And it were a prouder lot to be at thy feet than on the throne of St. Peter."

¹ It is a characteristic anecdote of this bold Churchman, that Urban V. one day demanded an account of the sums spent in his military expedition against the Italian tyrants. The Cardinal presented to the Pope a waggon, filled with the keys of the cities and fortresses he had taken. "This is my account," said he; "you perceive how I have invested your money." The Pope embraced him, and gave him no further trouble about his accounts.

A momentary blush passed over the cheek of the Signora, yet it seemed the blush of indignation as much as of vanity; it was succeeded by an extreme paleness. She paused before she replied; and then, fixing her large and haughty eyes on the enamoured Spaniard, she said, in a low voice,

"My Lord Cardinal, I do not affect to misunderstand your words; neither do I place them to the account of a general gallantry. I am vain enough to believe you imagine you speak truly when you say you love me."

"Imagine!" echoed the Spaniard.

"Listen to me," continued the Signora. "She whom the Cardinal Albornoze honours with his love has a right to demand of him its proofs. In the papal court, whose power like his?—I require you to exercise it for me."

"Speak, dearest lady; have your estates been seized by the barbarians of these lawless times? Hath any dared to injure you? Lands and titles, are these thy wish?—my power is thy slave."

"Cardinal, no! there is one thing dearer to an Italian and a woman than wealth or station—it is revenge!"

The Cardinal drew back from the flashing eye that was bent upon him, but the spirit of her speech touched a congenial chord.

"There," said he, after a little hesitation, "there spake high descent. Revenge is the luxury of the well-born. Let serfs and churls forgive an injury. Proceed, lady."

"Hast thou heard the last news from Rome?" asked the Signora.

"Surely," replied the Cardinal, in some surprise, "we were poor statesmen to be ignorant of the condition of the capital of the papal dominions; and my heart mourns for that unfortunate city. But wherefore wouldst thou question me of Rome?—thou art——"

"Roman! Know, my lord, that I have a purpose in calling myself of Naples. To your discretion I entrust my secret—I am of Rome! Tell me of her state."

"Fairest one," returned the Cardinal, "I should have known that that brow and presence were not of the light *Campania*

My reason should have told me that they bore the stamp of the Empress of the World. The state of Rome," continued Alborno, in a graver tone, "is briefly told. Thou knowest that after the fall of the able but insolent Rienzi, Pepin, count of Minorbino (a creature of Montreal's), who had assisted in expelling him, would have betrayed Rome to Montreal,—but he was neither strong enough nor wise enough, and the Barons chased him as he had chased the Tribune. Some time afterwards a new demagogue, John Cerroni, was installed in the Capitol. He once more expelled the nobles; new revolutions ensued—the Barons were recalled. The weak successor of Rienzi summoned the people to arms—in vain: in terror and despair he abdicated his power, and left the city a prey to the interminable feuds of the Orsini, the Colonna, and the Savelli."

"Thus much I know, my Lord; but when his Holiness succeeded to the chair of Clement VI.—"

"Then," said Alborno, and a slight frown darkened his sallow brow, "then came the blacker part of the history. Two senators were elected in concert by the Pope."

"Their names?"

"Bertoldo Orsini, and one of the Colonna. A few weeks afterwards, the high price of provisions stung the rascal stomachs of the mob—they rose, they clamoured, they armed, they besieged the Capitol——"

"Well, well," cried the Signora, clasping her hands, and betokening in every feature her interest in the narration.

"Colonna only escaped death by a vile disguise; Bertoldo Orsini was stoned."

"Stoned!—there fell one!"

"Yes, Lady, one of a great house; the least drop of whose blood were worth an ocean of plebeian puddle. At present, all is disorder, misrule, anarchy at Rome. The contests of the nobles shake the city to the centre; and prince and people, wearied of so many experiments to establish a government, have now no governor but the fear of the sword. Such, fair madam, is the state of Rome. Sigh not, it occupies now our care. It shall be remedied; and I, madam, may be the happy instrument of restoring peace to your native city."

"There is but one way of restoring peace to Rome," answered the Signora, abruptly, "and that is—The restoration of Rienzi!"

The Cardinal started. "Madam," said he, "do I hear aright?—are you not nobly born?—can you desire the rise of a plebeian? Did you not speak of revenge, and now you ask for mercy?"

"Lord Cardinal," said the beautiful Signora, earnestly, "I do not ask for mercy: such a word is not for the lips of one who demands justice. Nobly born I am—ay, and from a stock to whose long descent from the patricians of ancient Rome the high line of Aragon itself would be of yesterday. Nay, I would not offend you, Monsignore; your greatness is not borrowed from pedigrees and tombstones—your greatness is your own achieving: would you speak honestly, my lord, you would own that you are proud only of *your own* laurels, and that, in your heart, you laugh at the stately fools who trick themselves out in the mouldering finery of the dead!"

"Muse! prophetess! you speak aright," said the high-spirited Cardinal, with unwonted energy; "and your voice is like that of the Fame I dreamed of in my youth. Speak on, speak ever!"

"Such," continued the Signora, "such as your pride is the just pride of Rienzi. Proud that he is the workman of his own great renown. In such as the Tribune of Rome we acknowledge the founders of noble lineage. Ancestry makes not them—they make ancestry. Enough of this. I am of noble race, it is true; but my house, and those of many, have been crushed and broken beneath the yoke of the Orsini and Colonna—it is against them I desire revenge. But I am better than an Italian lady—I am a Roman woman—I weep tears of blood for the disorders of my unhappy country. I mourn that even you, my lord, yes, that a barbarian, however eminent and however great, should mourn for Rome. I desire to restore her fortunes."

"But Rienzi would only restore his own."

"Not so, my Lord Cardinal; not so. Ambitious and proud he may be—great souls are so—but he has never had one wish divorced from the welfare of Rome. But put aside all thought

of his interests—it is not of these I speak. You desire to re-establish the papal power in Rome. Your senators have failed to do it. Demagogues fail—Rienzi alone can succeed; he alone can command the turbulent passions of the Barons—he alone can sway the capricious and fickle mob. Release, restore Rienzi, and through Rienzi the Pope regains Rome!”

The Cardinal did not answer for some moments. Buried as in a reverie, he sat motionless, shading his face with his hand. Perhaps he secretly owned there was a wiser policy in the suggestions of the Signora than he cared openly to confess. Lifting his head, at length, from his bosom, he fixed his eyes upon the Signora's watchful countenance, and, with a forced smile, said,

“Pardon me, madam; but while we play the politicians, forget not that I am thy adorer. Sagacious may be thy counsels, yet wherefore are they urged? Why this anxious interest for Rienzi? If by releasing him the Church may gain an ally, am I sure that Giles d'Albornoz will not raise a rival?”

“My lord,” said the Signora, half rising, “you are my suitor; but your rank does not tempt me—your gold cannot buy. If you love me, I have a right to command your services to whatsoever task I would require—it is the law of chivalry. If ever I yield to the addresses of mortal lover, it will be to the man who restores to my native land her hero and her saviour.”

“Fair patriot,” said the Cardinal, “your words encourage my hope, yet they half damp my ambition; for fain would I desire that love and not service should alone give me the treasure that I ask. But hear me, sweet lady; you overrate my power: I cannot deliver Rienzi—he is accused of rebellion, he is excommunicated for heresy. His acquittal rests with himself.”

“You can procure his trial?”

“Perhaps, lady.”

“That *is* his acquittal. And a private audience of his Holiness?”

“Doubtless.”

“*That* is his restoration! Behold all I ask!”

“And then, sweet Roman, it will be *mine* to ask,” said the Cardinal, passionately, dropping on his knee, and taking the

Signora's hand. For one moment that proud lady felt that she was woman—she blushed, she trembled: but it was not (could the Cardinal have read that heart) with passion or with weakness; it was with terror and with shame. Passively she surrendered her hand to the Cardinal, who covered it with kisses.

"Thus inspired," said Alborno, rising, "I will not doubt of success. To-morrow I wait on thee again."

He pressed her hand to his heart—the lady felt it not. He sighed his farewell—she did not hear it. Lingeringly he gazed, and slowly he departed. But it was some moments before, recalled to herself, the Signora felt that she was alone.

"Alone!" she cried, half aloud, and with wild emphasis—"alone! Oh, what have I undergone—what have I said! Unfaithful even in thought to *him*! Oh, never! never! I that have felt the kiss of his hallowing lips—that have slept on his kingly heart—I!—holy Mother, befriend and strengthen me!" she continued, as, weeping bitterly, she sank upon her knees; and for some moments she was lost in prayer. Then, rising composed, but deadly pale, and with the tears rolling heavily down her cheeks, the Signora passed slowly to the casement; she threw it open, and bent forward; the air of the declining day came softly on her temples; it cooled, it mitigated, the fever that preyed within. Dark and huge before her frowned, in its gloomy shadow, the tower in which Rienzi was confined; she gazed at it long and wistfully, and then, turning away, drew from the folds of her robe a small and sharp dagger. "Let me save him for glory!" she murmured; "and *this* shall save me from dishonour!"

CHAPTER III.

HOLY MEN. — SAGACIOUS DELIBERATIONS. — JUST RESOLVES. — AND SORDID MOTIVES TO ALL.

ENAMOURD of the beauty, and almost equally so of the lofty spirit, of the Signora Cesarini, as was the warlike Cardinal of Spain, love with him was not so master a passion as that

ambition of complete success in all the active designs of life which had hitherto animated his character and signalized his career. Musing, as he left the Signora, on her wish for the restoration of the Roman Tribune, his experienced and profound intellect ran swiftly through whatever advantages to his own political designs might result from that restoration. We have seen that it was the intention of the new Pontiff to attempt the recovery of the patrimonial territories, now torn from him by the gripe of able and disaffected tyrants. With this view, a military force was already in preparation, and the Cardinal was already secretly nominated the chief. But the force was very inadequate to the enterprise; and Albornoz depended much upon the moral strength of the cause in bringing recruits to his standard in his progress through the Italian states. The wonderful rise of Rienzi had excited an extraordinary enthusiasm in his favour through all the free populations of Italy. And this had been yet more kindled and inflamed by the influential eloquence of Petrarch, who, at that time, possessed of a power greater than ever, before or since (not even excepting the Sage of Ferney), wielded by a single literary man, had put forth his boldest genius in behalf of the Roman Tribune. Such a companion as Rienzi in the camp of the Cardinal might be a magnet of attraction to the youth and enterprise of Italy. On nearing Rome, he might himself judge how far it would be advisable to reinstate Rienzi as a delegate of the papal power. And, in the meanwhile, the Roman's influence might be serviceable, whether to awe the rebellious nobles or conciliate the stubborn people. On the other hand, the Cardinal was shrewd enough to perceive that no possible good could arise from Rienzi's present confinement. With every month it excited deeper and more universal sympathy. To his lonely dungeon turned half the hearts of republican Italy. Literature had leagued its new and sudden, and therefore mighty and even disproportioned, power with his cause; and the Pope, without daring to be his judge, incurred the odium of being his gaoler. "A popular prisoner," said the sagacious Cardinal to himself, "is the most dangerous of guests. Restore him as your servant, or destroy him as your foe! In this case I see no alternative but acquittal or the knife!" In

these reflections that able plotter, deep in the Machiavelism of the age, divorced the lover from the statesman.

Recurring now to the former character, he felt some disagreeable and uneasy forebodings at the earnest interest of his mistress. Fain would he have attributed, either to some fantasy of patriotism or some purpose of revenge, the anxiety of the Cesarini; and there was much in her stern and haughty character which favoured that belief. But he was forced to acknowledge to himself some jealous apprehension of a sinister and latent motive, which touched his vanity and alarmed his love. "Howbeit," he thought, as he turned from his unwilling fear, "I can play with her at her own weapons; I can obtain the release of Rienzi, and claim my reward. If denied, the hand that opened the dungeon can again rivet the chain. In her anxiety is my power!"

These thoughts the Cardinal was still revolving in his palace, when he was suddenly summoned to attend the Pontiff.

The pontifical palace no longer exhibited the gorgeous yet graceful luxury of Clement VI., and the sarcastic Cardinal smiled to himself at the quiet gloom of the ante-chambers. "He thinks to set an example—this poor native of Limoges!" thought Alborno; "and has but the mortification of finding himself eclipsed by the poorest bishop. He humbles himself, and fancies that the humility will be contagious."

His Holiness was seated before a small and rude table bestrewed with papers, his face buried in his hands; the room was simply furnished, and in a small niche beside the casement was an ivory crucifix; below, the death's head and cross-bones, which most monks then introduced with a purpose similar to that of the ancients by the like ornaments,—mementos of the shortness of life, and therefore admonitions to make the best of it! On the ground lay a map of the Patrimonial Territory, with the fortresses in especial distinctly and prominently marked. The Pope gently lifted up his head as the Cardinal was announced, and discovered a plain but sensible and somewhat interesting countenance. "My son!" said he, with a kindly courtesy to the lowly salutation of the proud Spaniard, "scarcely wouldst

thou imagine, after our long conference this morning, that new cares would so soon demand the assistance of thy counsels. Verily, the wreath of thorns stings sharp under the triple crown; and I sometimes long for the quiet abode of my old professor's chair in Toulouse: my station is of pain and of toil."

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," observed the Cardinal, with pious and compassionate gravity.

Innocent could scarcely refrain a smile as he replied, "The lamb that carries the cross must have the strength of the lion. Since we parted, my son, I have had painful intelligence; our couriers have arrived from the Campagna—the heathen rage furiously—the force of John di Vico has augmented fearfully, and the most redoubted adventurer of Europe has enlisted under his banner."

"Does his Holiness," cried the Cardinal, anxiously, "speak of Fra Moreale, the Knight of St. John?"

"Of no less a warrior," returned the Pontiff. "I dread the vast ambition of that wild adventurer."

"Your Holiness hath cause," said the Cardinal, drily.

"Some letters of his nave fallen into the hands of the servants of the Church; they are here: read them, my son."

Albornoz received and deliberately scanned the letters; this done, he replaced them on the table, and remained for a few moments silent and absorbed.

"What think you, my son?" said the Pope, at length, with an impatient and even peevish tone.

"I think that, with Montreal's hot genius and John di Vico's frigid villany, your Holiness may live to envy, if not the quiet, at least the revenue, of the Professor's chair."

"How, Cardinal!" said the Pope, hastily, and with an angry flush on his pale brow. The Cardinal quietly proceeded.

"By these letters it seems that Montreal has written to all the commanders of free lances throughout Italy, offering the highest pay of a soldier to every man who will join his standard, combined with the richest plunder of a brigand. He meditates great schemes then!—I know the man!"

"Well,—and our course?"

"Is plain," said the Cardinal, loftily, and with an eye that

flashed with a soldier's fire. "Not a moment is to be lost ! Thy son should at once take the field. Up with the Banner of the Church !"

"But are we strong enough ? our numbers are few. Zeal slackens ! the piety of the Baldwins is no more !"

"Your Holiness knows well," said the Cardinal, "that for the multitude of men there are two watchwords of war—Liberty and Religion. If Religion begins to fail, we must employ the profaner word. 'Up with the Banner of the Church—and down with the tyrants !' We will proclaim equal laws and free government ;¹ and, God willing, our camp shall prosper better with those promises than the tents of Montreal with the more vulgar shout of 'Pay and Rapine.'"

"Giles d'Alborno," said the Pope, emphatically ; and, warmed by the spirit of the Cardinal, he dropped the wonted etiquette of the phrase, "I trust implicitly to you. Now the right hand of the Church—hereafter, perhaps, its head. Too well I feel that the lot has fallen on a lowly place. My successor must requite my deficiencies."

No changing hue, no brightening glance, betrayed to the searching eye of the Pope whatever emotion these words had called up in the breast of the ambitious Cardinal. He bowed his proud head humbly as he answered, "Pray Heaven that Innocent VI. may long live to guide the Church to glory. For Giles d'Alborno, less priest than soldier, the din of the camp the breath of the war-steed, suggest the only aspirations which he ever dares indulge. But has your Holiness imparted to your servant all that——"

"Nay," interrupted Innocent, "I have yet intelligence equally ominous. This John di Vico,—pest go with him !—who still styles himself (the excommunicated ruffian !) Prefect of Rome, has so filled that unhappy city with his emissaries, that we have well-nigh lost the seat of the Apostle. Rome, long in anarchy, seems now in open rebellion. The nobles—sons of Belial !—it is true, are once more humbled ; but how ?—One Baroncelli, a

¹ In correcting the pages of this work, in the year 1847 . . . strange coincidences between the present policy of the Roman Church and that by which in the 14th century it recovered both spiritual and temporal power cannot fail to suggest themselves.

new demagogue, the fiercest—the most bloody that the fiend ever helped—has arisen—is invested by the mob with power, and uses it to butcher the people and insult the Pontiff. Wearied of the crimes of this man (which are not even decorated by ability), the shout of the people day and night along the streets is for ‘Rienzi the Tribune.’”

“Ha!” said the Cardinal, “Rienzi’s faults then are forgotten in Rome, and there is felt for him the same enthusiasm in that city as in the rest of Italy?”

“Alas! it is so.”

“It is well, I have thought of this: Rienzi can accompany my progress——”

“My son! the rebel, the heretic——”

“By your Holiness’s absolution will become a quiet subject and orthodox Catholic,” said Albornoz. “Men are good or bad as they suit our purpose. What matters a virtue that is useless, or a crime that is useful to us? The army of the Church proceeds against tyrants—it proclaims everywhere to the Papal towns the restoration of their popular constitutions. Sees not your Holiness that the acquittal of Rienzi, the popular darling, will be hailed an earnest of your sincerity?—sees not your Holiness that his name will fight for us?—sees not your Holiness that the great demagogue Rienzi must be used to extinguish the little demagogue Baroncelli? We must regain the Romans, whether of the city or whether in the seven towns of John di Vico. When they hear Rienzi is in our camp, trust me, we shall have a multitude of deserters from the tyrants—trust me, we shall hear no more of Baroncelli.”

“Ever sagacious,” said the Pope, musingly; “it is true we can use this man: but with caution. His genius is formidable——

“And therefore must be conciliated; if we acquit, we must make him ours. My experience has taught me this—when you cannot slay a demagogue by law, crush him with honours. He must be no longer Tribune of the People. Give him the Patrician title of *Senator*, and he is then the Lieutenant of the Pope!”

“I will see to this, my son,—your suggestions please, but alarm me: he shall at least be examined;—but if found a heretic——”

"Should, I humbly advise, be declared a saint."

The Pope bent his brow for a moment, but the effort was too much for him, and after a moment's struggle, he fairly laughed aloud.

"Go to, my son," said he, affectionately patting the Cardinal's sallow cheek. "Go to. If the world heard thee, what would it say?"

"That Giles d'Albornoz had just enough religion to remember that the State is a Church, but not too much to forget that the Church is a State."

With these words the conference ended. That very evening the Pope decreed that Rienzi should be permitted the trial he had demanded.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LADY AND THE PAGE.

IT wanted three hours of midnight, when Albornoz, resuming his character of gallant, despatched to the Signora Cesarini the following billet.

"Your commands are obeyed. Rienzi will receive an examination on his faith. It is well that he should be prepared. It may suit your purpose, as to which I am so faintly enlightened, to appear to the prisoner what you are—the obtainer of this grace. See how implicitly one noble heart can trust another! I send by the bearer an order that will admit one of your servitors to the prisoner's cell. Be it, if you will, your task to announce to him the new crisis of his fate. Ah! madam, may fortune be as favourable to me, and grant me the same intercessor—from thy lips my sentence is to come."

As Albornoz finished this epistle, he summoned his confidential attendant, a Spanish gentleman, who saw nothing in his noble birth that should prevent his fulfilling the various behests of the Cardinal.

"Alvarez," said he, "these to the Signora Cesarini by another hand; thou art unknown to her household. Repair to the state

tower ; this to the Governor admits thee. Mark who is admitted to the prisoner Cola di Rienzi. Know his name, examine whence he comes. Be keen, Alvarez. Learn by what motive the Cesarini interests herself in the prisoner's fate. All too of herself, birth, fortunes, lineage, would be welcome intelligence. Thou comprehendest me ? It is well. One caution—thou hast no mission from, no connection with, me. Thou art an officer of the prison, or of the Pope,—what thou wilt. Give me the rosary ; light the lamp before the crucifix ; place yon hair-shirt beneath those arms. I would have it appear as if *meant* to be hidden ! Tell Gomez that the Dominican preacher is to be admitted."

"Those friars have zeal," continued the Cardinal to himself, as, after executing his orders, Alvarez withdrew. "They would burn a man—but only on the Bible ! They are worth conciliating, if the triple crown be really worth the winning ; were it mine, I would add the eagle's plume to it."

And plunged into the aspiring future, this bold man forgot even the object of his passion. In real life, after a certain age, ambitious men love indeed ; but it is only as an interlude. And indeed with most men, life has more absorbing though not more frequent concerns than those of love. Love is the business of the idle, but the idleness of the busy.

The Cesarini was alone when the Cardinal's messenger arrived, and he was scarcely dismissed with a few lines, expressive of a gratitude which seemed to bear down all those guards with which the coldness of the Signora usually fenced her pride, before the page Angelo was summoned to her presence.

The room was dark with the shades of the gathering night when the youth entered, and he discerned but dimly the outline of the Signora's stately form ; but by the tone of her voice, he perceived that she was deeply agitated.

"Angelo," said she, as he approached, "Angelo—" and her voice failed her. She paused as for breath, and again proceeded, "You alone have served us faithfully ; you alone shared our escape, our wanderings, our exile—you alone know my secret—you of my train alone are Roman !—Roman ! it was once a great name. Angelo, the name has fallen ; but it is only because the

nature of the Roman race fell first. Haughty they are, but fickle; fierce, but dastard; vehement in promise, but rotten in their faith. You are a Roman, and though I have proved your truth, your very birth makes me afraid of falsehood."

"Madam," said the page, "I was but a child when you admitted me into your service, and I am yet only on the verge of manhood. But boy though I yet be, I would brave the stoutest lance of knight or freebooter, in defence of the faith of Angelo Villani to his liege lady and his native land."

"Alas! alas!" said the Signora, bitterly, "such have been the *words* of thousands of thy race. What have been their deeds? But I will trust thee, as I have trusted ever. I know that thou art covetous of honour, that thou hast youth's comely and bright ambition."

"I am an orphan and a bastard," said Angelo, bluntly! "And circumstance stings me sharply on to action; I would win my own name."

"Thou shalt," said the Signora. "We shall live yet to reward thee. And now be quick. Bring hither one of thy page's suits, —mantle and head-gear. Quick, I say, and whisper not to a soul what I have asked of thee."

CHAPTER V.

THE INMATE OF THE TOWER.

THE night slowly advanced, and in the highest chamber of that dark and rugged tower which fronted the windows of the Cesarini's palace sate a solitary prisoner. A single lamp burned before him on a table of stone, and threw its rays over an open Bible; and those stern but fantastic legends of the prowess of ancient Rome, which the genius of Livy has dignified into history.¹ A chain hung pendent from the vault of the tower, and confined the captive; but so as to leave his limbs at

¹ "Avea libri assai, suo Tito Livio, sue storie di Roma, la Bibbia et altri libri assai, non finava di studiare."—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 13. See translation to motto to Book VII. p. 344.

sufficient liberty to measure at will the greater part of the cell. Green and damp were the mighty stones of the walls, and through a narrow aperture, high out of reach, came the moonlight, and slept in long shadow over the rude floor. A bed at one corner completed the furniture of the room. Such for months had been the abode of the conqueror of the haughtiest Barons, and the luxurious dictator of the stateliest city of the world!

Care, and travel, and time, and adversity had wrought their change in the person of Rienzi. The proportions of his frame had enlarged from the compact strength of earlier manhood, the clear paleness of his cheek was bespread with a hectic and deceitful glow. Even in his present studies, intent as they seemed, and genial though the lecture to a mind enthusiastic even to fanaticism, his eyes could not rivet themselves as of yore steadily to the page. The charm was gone from the letters. Every now and then he moved restlessly, started, re-settled himself, and muttered broken exclamations like a man in an anxious dream. Anon, his gaze impatiently turned upward, about, around, and there was a strange and wandering fire in those large deep eyes, which might have thrilled the beholder with a vague and unaccountable awe.

Angelo had in the main correctly narrated the more recent adventures of Rienzi after his fall. He had first with Nina and Angelo betaken himself to Naples, and found a fallacious and brief favour with Louis, king of Hungary; that harsh but honourable monarch had refused to yield his illustrious guest to the demands of Clement, but had plainly declared his inability to shelter him in safety. Maintaining secret intercourse with his partizans at Rome, the fugitive then sought a refuge with the Eremites, sequestered in the lone recesses of the Monte Maiella, where in solitude and thought he had passed a whole year, save the time consumed in his visit to and return from Florence. Taking advantage of the Jubilee in Rome, he had then, disguised as a pilgrim, traversed the vales and mountains still rich in the melancholy ruins of ancient Rome, and entering the city, his restless and ambitious spirit indulged in new but vain conspiracies.¹ Excommunicated a second time by the Cardinal di

¹ Rainald, Ann. 1350, N. 4, E. 5.

Ceccano, and again a fugitive, he shook the dust from his feet as he left the city, and raising his hands towards those walls, in which are yet traced the witness of the Tarquins, cried aloud—"Honoured as thy prince—persecuted as thy victim—Rome, Rome, thou shalt yet receive me as thy conqueror!"

Still disguised as a pilgrim, he passed unmolested through Italy into the Court of the Emperor Charles of Bohemia, where the page, who had probably witnessed, had rightly narrated, his reception. It is doubtful, however, whether the conduct of the Emperor had been as chivalrous as appears by Angelo's relation, or whether he had not delivered Rienzi to the Pontiff's emissaries. At all events, it is certain, that from Prague to Avignon, the path of the fallen Tribune had been as one triumph. His strange adventures—his unbroken spirit—the new power that Intellect daily and wonderfully excited over the minds of the rising generation—the eloquence of Petrarch, and the common sympathy of the vulgar for fallen greatness,—all conspired to make Rienzi the hero of the age. Not a town through which he passed which would not have risked a siege for his protection—not a house that would not have sheltered him—not a hand that would not have struck in his defence. Refusing all offers of aid, disdaining all occasion of escape, inspired by his indomitable hope, and his unalloyed belief in the brightness of his own destinies, the Tribune sought Avignon—and found a dungeon!

These, his external adventures, are briefly and easily told; but who shall tell what passed within?—who narrate the fearful history of the heart?—who paint the rapid changes of emotion and of thought—the indignant grief—the stern dejection—the haughty disappointment that saddened while it never destroyed the resolve of that great soul?—Who can say what must have been endured, what meditated, in the hermitage of Maiella;—on the lonely hills of the perished empire it had been his dream to restore;—in the Courts of Barbarian Kings;—and above all, on returning obscure and disguised, amidst the crowds of the Christian world, to the seat of his former power? What elements of memory, and in what a wild and fiery brain! What reflections to be conned in the dungeons of Avignon, by a man who had pushed into all the fervour of fanaticism, four passions—a single

one of which has, in excess, sufficed to wreck the strongest reason—passions which in themselves it is most difficult to combine,—the dreamer—the aspirant—the very nympholept of Freedom, yet of Power—of knowledge, yet of Religion!

“Ay,” muttered the prisoner, “ay, these texts are comforting—comforting. The righteous are not always oppressed.” With a long sigh he deliberately put aside the Bible, kissed it with great reverence, remained silent and musing for some minutes; and then as a slight noise was heard at one corner of the cell, said softly, “Ah, my friends, my comrades, the rats! it is their hour—I am glad I put aside the bread for them!” His eye brightened as it now detected those strange and unsocial animals, venturing forth through a hole in the wall, and darkening the moonshine on the floor, steal fearlessly towards him. He flung some fragments of bread to them, and for some moments watched their gambols with a smile. “Manchino, the white-faced rascal! he beats all the rest—ha, ha! he is a superior wretch—he commands the tribe, and will venture the first into the trap. How will he bite against the steel, the fine fellow! while all the ignobler herd will gaze at him afar off, and quake and fear, and never help. Yet if united, they might gnaw the trap and release their leader! Ah, ye are base vermin, ye eat my bread, yet if death came upon me, ye would riot on my carcass. Away!” and clapping his hands, the chain round him clanked harshly, and the noisome co-mates of his dungeon vanished in an instant.

That singular and eccentric humour which marked Rienzi, and which had seemed a buffoonery to the stolid sullenness of the Roman nobles, still retained its old expression in his countenance, and he laughed loud as he saw the vermin hurry back to their hiding-place.

“A little noise and the clank of a chain—fie, how ye imitate mankind!” Again he sank into silence, and then heavily and listlessly drawing towards him the animated tales of Livy, said, “An hour to midnight!—waking dreams are better than sleep. Well, history tells us how men have risen—ay, and nations too—after sadder falls than that of Rienzi or of Rome!”

In a few minutes, he was apparently absorbed in the lecture;

so intent indeed was he in the task, that he did not hear the steps which wound the spiral stairs that conducted to his cell, and it was not till the wards harshly grated beneath the huge key, and the door creaked on its hinges, that Rienzi, in amaze at intrusion at so unwonted an hour, lifted his eyes. The door had reclosed on the dungeon, and by the lonely and pale lamp he beheld a figure leaning, as for support, against the wall. The figure was wrapped from head to foot in the long cloak of the day, which, aided by a broad hat, shaded by plumes, concealed even the features of the visitor.

Rienzi gazed long and wistfully

"Speak," said he at length, putting his hand to his brow. "Methinks either long solitude has bewildered me, or, sweet sir, your apparition dazzles. I know you not—am I sure?" and Rienzi's hair bristled while he slowly rose—"am I sure that it is a living man who stands before me? Angels have entered the prison-house before now. Alas! an angel's comfort never was more needed."

The stranger answered not, but the captive saw that his heart heaved even beneath his cloak; loud sobs choked his voice. At length, as by a violent effort, he sprang forward, and sank at the Tribune's feet. The disguising hat, the long mantle fell to the ground—it was the face of a woman that looked upward through passionate and glazing tears—the arms of a woman that clasped the prisoner's knees! Rienzi gazed mute and motionless as stone. "Powers and Saints of Heaven!" he murmured at last, "do ye tempt me further—is it—no, no—yet speak!"

"Beloved—adored!—do you not know me?"

"It is—it is!" shrieked Rienzi wildly; "it is my Nina—my wife—my——" His voice forsook him. Clasped in each other's arms, the unfortunates for some moments seemed to have lost even the sense of delight at their reunion. It was as an unconscious and deep trance, through which something *like* a dream only faintly and indistinctly stirs.

At length recovered—at length restored, the first broken exclamations, the first wild caresses of joy over—Nina lifted her head from her husband's bosom, and gazed sadly on his countenance—"Oh, what thou hast known since we parted!—

what, since that hour when, borne on by thy bold heart and wild destiny, thou didst leave me in the Imperial Court, to seek again the diadem and find the chain! Ah! why did I heed thy commands?—why suffer thee to depart alone? How often in thy progress hitherward, in doubt, in danger, might this bosom have been thy resting-place, and this voice have whispered comfort to my soul! Thou art well, my Lord—my Cola? Thy pulse beats quicker than of old—thy brow is furrowed. Ah! tell me thou art well!”

“Well,” said Rienzi, mechanically. “Methinks so!—the mind diseased blunts all sense of bodily decay. Well—yes! And thou—thou, at least art not changed, save to maturer beauty. The glory of the laurel-wreath has not faded from thy brow. Thou shalt yet—” then breaking off abruptly—“Rome—tell me of Rome! And thou—how camest thou hither? Ah! perhaps my doom is sealed, and in their mercy they have vouchsafed that I should see thee once more before the deathsman blinds me. I remember it is the grace vouchsafed to malefactors. When *I* was a lord of life and death, I too permitted the meanest criminal to say farewell to those he loved.”

“No—not so, Cola!” exclaimed Nina, putting her hand before his mouth. “I bring thee more auspicious tidings. To-morrow thou art to be heard. The favour of the Court is propitiated. Thou wilt be acquitted.”

“Ha! speak again.”

“Thou wilt be heard, my Cola—thou must be acquitted!”

“And Rome be free!—Great God, I thank Thee!”

The Tribune sank on his knees, and never had his heart, in his youngest and purest hour, poured forth thanksgiving more fervent, yet less selfish. When he rose again, the whole man seemed changed. His eye had resumed its earlier expressions of deep and serene command. Majesty sat upon his brow. The sorrows of the exile were forgotten. In his sanguine and rapid thoughts, he stood once more the guardian of his country,—and its sovereign!

Nina gazed upon him with that intense and devoted worship, which steeped her vainer and her harder qualities in all the fondness of the softest woman. “Such,” thought she, “was

his look eight years ago, when he left my maiden chamber, full of the mighty schemes which liberated Rome—such his look, when at the dawning sun he towered amidst the crouching Barons, and the kneeling population of the city he had made his throne!”

“Yes, Nina!” said Rienzi, as he turned and caught her eye. “My soul tells me that my hour is at hand. If they try me openly, they dare not convict—if they acquit me, they dare not but restore. To-morrow, saidst thou, to-morrow?”

“To-morrow, Rienzi; be prepared!”

“I am—for triumph! But tell me what happy chance brought thee to Avignon?”

“*Chance, Cola!*” said Nina, with reproachful tenderness. “Could I know that thou wert in the dungeons of the Pontiff and linger in idle security at Prague? Even at the Emperor’s Court thou hadst thy partisans and favourers. Gold was easily procured. I repaired to Florence—disguised my name—and came hither to plot, to scheme, to win thy liberty, or to die with thee. Ah! did not thy heart tell thee that morning and night the eyes of thy faithful Nina gazed upon this gloomy tower; and that one friend, humble though she be, never could forsake thee!”

“Sweet Nina! Yet—yet—at Avignon power yields not to beauty without reward. Remember there is a worse death than the pause of life.”

Nina turned pale. “Fear not,” she said, with a low but determined voice; “fear not that men’s lips should say Rienzi’s wife delivered him. None in this corrupted Court know that I am thy wife.”

“Woman,” [said the Tribune, sternly; “thy lips elude the answer I would seek. In our degenerate time and land, thy sex and ours forget too basely what foulness writes a leprosy in the smallest stain upon a matron’s honour. That thy heart would never wrong me, I believe; and if thy weakness, thy fear of my death should wrong me, thou art a bitterer foe to Rienzi than the swords of the Colonna. Nina, speak!”

“Oh, that my soul could speak,” answered Nina. “Thy words are music to me, and not a thought of mine but echoes them. Could I touch this hand, could I meet that eye, and not

know that death were dearer to thee than shame? Rienzi, when last we parted, in sadness, yet in hope, what were thy words to me?"

"I remember them well," returned the Tribune: "'I leave thee,' I said, 'to keep alive at the Emperor's Court, by thy genius, the Great Cause. Thou hast youth and beauty—and courts have lawless and ruffian suitors. I give thee no caution; it were beneath thee and me. But I leave thee the power of death.' And with that, Nina——"

"Thy hands tremblingly placed in mine this dagger. I live—need I say more?"

"My noble and beloved Nina it is enough. Keep the dagger yet."

"Yes; till we meet in the Capitol of Rome!"

A slight tap was heard at the door; Nina regained in an instant her disguise.

"It is on the stroke of midnight," said the gaoler, appearing at the threshold.

"I come," said Nina.

"And thou hast to prepare thy thoughts," she whispered to Rienzi: "arm all thy glorious intellect. Alas! is it again we part? How my heart sinks!"

The presence of the gaoler at the threshold broke the bitterness of parting by abridging it. The false page pressed her lips on the prisoner's hand, and left the cell.

The gaoler, lingering behind for a moment, placed a parchment on the table. It was the summons from the court apportioned for the trial of the Tribune.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCENT DOES NOT LIE.—THE PRIEST AND THE SOLDIER.

ON descending the stairs, Nina was met by Alvarez.

"Fair page," said the Spaniard, gaily, "thy name, thou tellest me, is Villani?—Angelo Villani—why I know thy kinsman, methinks. Vouchsafe, young master, to enter this chamber,

and drink a night-cup to thy lady's health; I would fain learn tidings of my old friends."

"At another time," answered the false Angelo, drawing the cloak closer round her face; "it is late—I am hurried."

"Nay," said the Spaniard, "you escape me not so easily;" and he caught firm hold of the page's shoulder.

"Unhand me, sir!" said Nina, haughtily, and almost weeping, for her strong nerves were yet unstrung. "Gaoler, at thy peril—unbar the gates."

"So hot," said Alvarez, surprised at so great a waste of dignity in a page; "nay, I meant not to offend thee. May I wait on thy pageship to-morrow?"

"Ay, to-morrow," said Nina, eager to escape.

"And meanwhile," said Alvarez, "I will accompany thee home—we can confer by the way."

So saying, without regarding the protestations of the supposed page, he passed with Nina into the open air. "Your lady," said he, carelessly, "is wondrous fair; her lightest will is law to the greatest noble of Avignon. Methinks she is of Naples—is it so? Art thou dumb, sweet youth?"

The page did not answer, but with a step so rapid that it almost put the slow Spaniard out of breath, hastened along the narrow space between the tower and the palace of the Signora Cesarini, nor could all the efforts of Alvarez draw forth a single syllable from his reluctant companion, till they reached the gates of the palace, and he found himself discourteously left without the walls.

"A plague on the boy!" said he, biting his lips; "if the Cardinal thrive as well as his servant, by'r Lady, Monsignor is a happy man!"

By no means pleased with the prospect of an interview with Alborno, who, like most able men, valued the talents of those he employed exactly in proportion to their success, the Spaniard slowly returned home. With the licence accorded to him, he entered the Cardinal's chamber somewhat abruptly, and perceived him in earnest conversation with a Cavalier, whose long moustache, curled upward, and the bright cuirass worn underneath his mantle, seemed to betoken him of martial profession

Pleased with the respite, Alvarez hastily withdrew : and in fact, the Cardinal's thoughts at that moment, and for that night, were bent upon other subjects than those of love.

The interruption served, however, to shorten the conversation between Albornozy and his guest. The latter rose.

"I think," said he, buckling on a short and broad rapier, which he laid aside during the interview,— "I think, my Lord Cardinal, you encourage me to consider that our negotiation stands a fair chance of a prosperous close. Ten thousand florins, and my brother quits Viterbo, and launches the thunderbolt of the Company on the lands of Rimini. On your part——"

"On my part it is agreed," said the Cardinal, "that the army of the Church interferes not with the course of your brother's arms—there is peace between us. One warrior understands another!"

"And the word of Giles d'Albornozy, son of the royal race of Aragon, is a guarantee for the faith of a Cardinal," replied the Cavalier, with a smile. "It is, my lord, in your *former* quality that we treat."

"There is my right hand," answered Albornozy, too politic to heed the insinuation. The Cavalier raised it respectfully to his lips, and his armed tread was soon heard descending the stairs.

"Victory," cried Albornozy, tossing his arms aloft; "victory, now thou art mine!"

With that he rose hastily, deposited his papers in an iron chest, and opening a concealed door behind the arras, entered a chamber that rather resembled a monk's cell than the apartment of a prince. Over a mean pallet hung a sword, a dagger, and a rude image of the Virgin. Without summoning Alvarez the Cardinal unrobed, and in a few moments was asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

VAUCLUSE AND ITS GENIUS LOCI.—OLD ACQUAINTANCE RENEWED.

THE next day at early noon the Cavalier, whom our last chapter presented to the reader, was seen mounted on a strong Norman horse, winding his way slowly along a green and pleasant path some miles from Avignon. At length he found himself in a wild and romantic valley, through which wandered that delightful river whose name the verse of Petrarch has given to so beloved a fame. Sheltered by rocks, and in this part winding through the greenest banks, enamelled with a thousand wild flowers and water-weeds, went the crystal Sorgia. Advancing farther, the landscape assumed a more sombre and sterile aspect. The valley seemed inclosed or shut in by fantastic rocks of a thousand shapes, down which dashed and glittered a thousand rivulets. And in the very wildest of the scene, the ground suddenly opened into a quaint and cultivated garden, through which, amidst a profusion of foliage was seen a small and lonely mansion,—the hermitage of the place. The horseman was in the valley of the Vaucluse, and before his eye lay the garden and the house of PETRARCH! Carelessly, however, his eye scanned the consecrated spot; and unconsciously it rested for a moment, upon a solitary figure seated musingly by the margin of the river. A large dog at the side of the noonday idler barked at the horseman as he rode on. "A brave animal and a deep bay!" thought the traveller; to him the dog seemed an object much more interesting than its master. And so,—as the crowd of little men pass unheeding and unmoved those in whom Posterity shall acknowledge the landmarks of their age,—the horseman turned his glance from the Poet!

Thrice blessed name! Immortal Florentine!¹ not as the lover, nor even as the poet, do I bow before thy consecrated

¹ I need scarcely say that it is his origin, not his actual birth, which entitles us to term Petrarch a Florentine.

memory—venerating thee as one it were sacrilege to introduce in this unworthy page—save by name and as a shadow; but as the first who ever asserted to people and to prince the august majesty of Letters; who claimed for Genius the prerogative to influence states, to control opinion, to hold an empire over the hearts of men, and prepare events by animating passion and guiding thought! What (though but feebly felt and dimly seen)—what do we yet owe to thee if Knowledge be now a Power; if MIND be a Prophet and a Fate, foretelling and fore-dooming the things to come! From the greatest to the least of us, to whom the pen is at once a sceptre and a sword, the low-born Florentine has been the arch-messenger to smooth the way and prepare the welcome. Yes! even the meanest of the aftercomers—even he who now vents his gratitude,—is thine everlasting debtor! Thine, how largely is the honour, if his labours, humble though they be, find an audience wherever literature is known; preaching in remotest lands the moral of forgotten revolutions, and scattering in the palace and the market-place the seeds that shall ripen into fruit when the hand of the sower shall be dust, and his very name perhaps be lost! For few, alas! are they whose *names* may outlive the grave; but the *thoughts* of every man who writes are made undying;—others appropriate, advance, exalt them; and millions of minds unknown, undreamt of, are required to produce the immortality of one.

Indulging meditations very different from those which the idea of Petrarch awakens in a later time, the Cavalier pursued his path.

The valley was long left behind, and the way grew more and more faintly traced, until it terminated in a wood, through whose tangled boughs the sunlight broke playfully. At length, the wood opened into a wide glade, from which rose a precipitous ascent, crowned with the ruins of an old castle. The traveller dismounted, led his horse up the ascent, and, gaining the ruins, left his steed within one of the roofless chambers, overgrown with the longest grass and a profusion of wild shrubs; thence ascending, with some toil, a narrow and broken staircase, he found himself in a small room, less decayed than the rest, of which the roof and floor were yet whole.

Stretched on the ground in his cloak, and leaning his head thoughtfully on his hand, was a man of tall stature and middle age. He lifted himself on his arm with great alacrity as the Cavalier entered.

"Well, Brettone, I have counted the hours—what tidings?"

"Albornoz consents."

"Glad news! Thou givest me new life. *Pardieu!* I shall breakfast all the better for this, my brother. Hast thou remembered that I am famishing?"

Brettone drew from beneath his cloak a sufficiently huge cask of wine, and a small panier, tolerably well filled; the inmate of the tower threw himself upon the provant with great devotion. And both the soldiers, for such they were, stretched at length on the ground, regaled themselves with considerable zest, talking hastily and familiarly between every mouthful.

"I say, Brettone, thou playest unfairly; thou hast already devoured more than half the pasty: push it hitherwards. And so the Cardinal consents! What manner of man is he? Able as they say?"

"Quick, sharp, and earnest, with an eye of fire, few words, and comes to the point."

"Unlike a priest, then;—a good brigand spoilt. What hast thou heard of the force he heads? Ho, not so fast with the wine."

"Scanty at present. He relies on recruits throughout Italy."

"What his designs for Rome? There, my brother, there tends my secret soul! As for these petty towns and petty tyrants, I care not how they fall, or by whom. But the Pope must not return to Rome. Rome must be mine. The city of a new empire, the conquest of a new Attila! There every circumstance combines in my favour!—the absence of the Pope, the weakness of the middle class, the poverty of the populace, the imbecile though ferocious barbarism of the Barons, have long concurred to render Rome the most facile, while the most glorious conquest!"

"My brother, pray Heaven your ambition do not wreck you at last; you are ever losing sight of the land. Surely, with the immense wealth we are acquiring, we may——"

"Aspire to be something greater than Free Companions, generals to-day; and adventurers to-morrow. Rememberest thou how the Norman sword won Sicily, and how the bastard William converted on the field of Hastings his baton into a sceptre? I tell thee, Brettone, that this loose Italy has crowns on the hedge that a dexterous hand may carry off at the point of the lance. My course is taken, I will form the fairest army in Italy, and with it I will win a throne in the Capitol. Fool that I was six years ago!—instead of deputing that mad dolt, Pepin of Minorbino, had I myself deserted the Hungarian, and repaired with my soldiery to Rome, the fall of Rienzi would have been followed by the rise of Montreal. Pepin was outwitted, and threw away the prey after he had hunted it down. The lion shall not again trust the chase to the jackal!"

"Walter, thou speakest of the fate of Rienzi, let it warn thee!"

"Rienzi!" replied Montreal; "I know the man! In peaceful times, or with an honest people, he would have founded a great dynasty. But he dreamt of laws and liberty for men who despise the first and will not protect the last. We, of a harder race, know that a new throne must be built by the feudal and not the civil system; and into the city we must transport the camp. It is by the multitude that the proud Tribune gained power,—by the multitude he lost it; it is by the sword that I will win it, and by the sword will I keep it!"

"Rienzi was too cruel; he should not have incensed the Barons;" said Brettone, about to finish the flask, when the strong hand of his brother plucked it from him, and anticipated the design.

"Pooh," said Montréal, finishing the draught with a long sigh, "he was not cruel enough. He sought only to be just, and not to distinguish between noble and peasant. He should have distinguished! He should have exterminated the nobles root and branch. But this no Italian can do. This is reserved for me."

"Thou wouldst not butcher all the best blood of Rome?"

"Butcher! No, but I would seize their lands, and endow with them a new nobility, the hardy and fierce nobility of the North,

who well know how to guard their prince, and *will* guard him as the fountain of their own power. Enough of this now, and talking of Rienzi—rots he still in his dungeon?"

"Why, this morning, ere I left, I heard strange news. The town was astir, groups in every corner. They said that Rienzi's trial was to be to-day, and from the names of the judges chosen, it is suspected that acquittal is already determined on."

"Ha! thou shouldst have told me of this before."

"Should he be restored to Rome, would it militate against thy plans?"

"Humph! I know not—deep thought and dexterous management would be needed. I would fain not leave this spot till I hear what is decided on."

"Surely, Walter, it would have been wiser and safer to have stayed with thy soldiery, and intrusted me with the absolute conduct of this affair."

"Not so," answered Montreal; "thou art a bold fellow enough, and a cunning——, but my head in these matters is better than thine. Besides," continued the knight, lowering his voice, and shading his face, "I had vowed a pilgrimage to the beloved river, and the old trysting-place. Ah me!—— But all this, Brettone, thou understandest not—let it pass. As for my safety, since we have come to this amnesty with Alborno, I fear but little danger even if discovered; besides, I want the florins. There are those in this country, Germans, who could eat an Italian army at a meal, whom I would fain engage, and their leaders want earnest-money—the griping knaves!—How are the Cardinal's florins to be paid?"

"Half now—half when thy troops are before Rimini!"

"Rimini! the thought whets my sword. Rememberest thou how that accursed Malatesta drove me from Aversa,¹ broke up my camp, and made me render to him all my booty? There fell the work of years! But for that my banner now would be floating over St. Angelo. I will pay back the debt with fire and sword ere the summer has shed its leaves."

¹ This Malatesta, a signior of illustrious family, was one of the most skilful warriors in Italy. He and his brother Galeotto had been raised to the joint-tyranny of Rimini by the voice of its citizens. After being long the foes of the Church, they were ultimately named as its captains by the Cardinal Alborno.

The fair countenance of Montreal grew terrible as he uttered these words, his hands griped the handle of his sword, and his strong frame heaved visibly ; tokens of the fierce and unsparing passions, by the aid of which a life of rapine and revenge had corrupted a nature originally full no less of the mercy than the courage of Provençal chivalry.

Such was the fearful man who now (the wildness of his youth sobered, and his ambition hardened and concentrated) was the rival with Rienzi for the mastery of Rome.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CROWD.—THE TRIAL.—THE VERDICT.—THE SOLDIER AND THE PAGE.

IT was on the following evening that a considerable crowd had gathered in the streets of Avignon. It was the second day of the examination of Rienzi, and with every moment was expected the announcement of the verdict. Amongst the foreigners of all countries assembled in that seat of the Papal splendour, the interest was intense. The Italians, even of the highest rank, were in favour of the Tribune, the French against him. As for the good townspeople of Avignon themselves, they felt but little excitement in anything that did not bring money into their pockets ; and if it had been put to the secret vote, no doubt there would have been a vast majority for burning the prisoner, as a marketable speculation.

Among the crowd was a tall man in a plain and rusty suit of armour, but with an air of knightly bearing which somewhat belied the coarseness of his mail ; he wore no helmet, but a small morion of black leather, with a long projecting shade, much used by wayfarers in the hot climates of the south. A black patch covered nearly the whole of one cheek, and altogether he bore the appearance of a grim soldier, with whom war had dealt harshly, both in purse and person.

Many were the jests at the shabby swordman's expense, with which that lively population amused their impatience ; and though the shade of the morion concealed his eyes, an arch and

merry smile about the corners of his mouth showed that he could take a jest at himself.

“Well,” said one of the crowd (a rich Milanese), “I am of a state that *was* free, and I trust the People’s man will have justice shown him.”

“Amen,” said a grave Florentine.

“They say,” whispered a young student from Paris, to a learned doctor of laws with whom he abode, “that his defence has been a masterpiece.”

“He hath taken no degrees,” replied the doctor, doubtingly. “Ho, friend, why dost thou push me so? thou hast rent my robe.”

This was said to a minstrel, or jongleur, who, with a small lute slung round him, was making his way, with great earnestness, through the throng.

“I beg pardon, worthy sir,” said the minstrel; “but this is a scene to be sung of! Centuries hence—ay, and in lands remote—legend and song will tell the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi, the friend of Petrarch and the Tribune of Rome!”

The young French student turned quickly round to the minstrel, with a glow on his pale face; not sharing the general sentiments of his countrymen against Rienzi, he felt that it was an era in the world when a minstrel spoke thus of the heroes of intellect—not of war.

At this time the tall soldier was tapped impatiently on the back.

“I pray thee, great sir,” said a sharp and imperious voice, “to withdraw that tall bulk of thine a little on one side—I cannot see through thee; and I would fain my eyes were among the first to catch a glimpse of Rienzi as he passes from the court.”

“Fair Sir page,” replied the soldier, good-humouredly, as he made way for Angelo Villani, “thou wilt not always find that way in the world is won by commanding the strong. When thou art older thou wilt beard the weak, and the strong thou wilt wheedle.”

“I must change my nature, then,” answered Angelo (who was of somewhat small stature, and not yet come to his full growth), trying still to raise himself above the heads of the crowd.

The soldier looked at him approvingly; and as he looked he sighed, and his lips worked with some strange emotion.

"Thou speakest well," said he, after a pause. "Pardon me the rudeness of the question; but art thou of Italy?—thy tongue savours of the Roman dialect; yet I have seen lineaments like thine on this side the Alps."

"It may be, good fellow," said the page, haughtily; "but I thank Heaven that I am of Rome."

At this moment a loud shout burst from that part of the crowd nearest the court. The sound of trumpets again hushed the throng into deep and breathless silence, while the Pope's guards, ranged along the space conducting from the court, drew themselves up more erect, and fell a step or two back upon the crowd.

As the trumpets ceased, the voice of a herald was heard, but it did not penetrate within several yards of the spot where Angelo and the soldier stood; and it was only by a mighty shout that in a moment circled through, and was echoed back by, the wide multitude—by the waving of kerchiefs from the windows—by broken ejaculations, which were caught up from lip to lip, that the page knew that Rienzi was acquitted.

"I would I could see his face!" sighed the page, querulously.

"And thou shalt," said the soldier; and he caught up the boy in his arms, and pressed on with the strength of a giant, parting the living stream from right to left, as he took his way to a place near the guards, and by which Rienzi was sure to pass.

The page, half-pleased, half-indignant, struggled a little, but finding it in vain, consented tacitly to what he felt an outrage on his dignity.

"Never mind," said the soldier, "thou art the first I ever willingly raised above myself; and I do it now for the sake of thy fair face, which reminds me of one I loved."

But these last words were spoken low, and the boy, in his anxiety to see the hero of Rome, did not hear or heed them. Presently Rienzi came by; two gentlemen, of the Pope's own following, walked by his side. He moved slowly, amidst the greetings and clamour of the crowd, looking neither to the right nor left. His bearing was firm and collected, and, save by the flush of his cheek, there was no external sign of joy or

excitement. Flowers dropped from every balcony on his path: and just when he came to a broader space, where the ground was somewhat higher, and where he was in fuller view of the houses around, he paused—and, uncovering, acknowledged the homage he had received, with a look—a gesture—which each who beheld never forgot. It haunted even that gay and thoughtless court, when the last tale of Rienzi's life reached their ears. And Angelo, clinging then round that soldier's neck, recalled—but we must not anticipate.

It was not, however, to the dark tower that Rienzi returned. His home was prepared at the palace of the Cardinal d'Albornoz. The next day he was admitted to the Pope's presence, and on the evening of that day he was proclaimed Senator of Rome.

Meanwhile the soldier had placed Angelo on the ground; and as the page faltered out no courteous thanks, he interrupted him in a sad and kind voice, the tone of which struck the page forcibly, so little did it suit the rough and homely appearance of the man.

"We part," he said, "as strangers, fair boy; and since thou sayest thou art of Rome, there is no reason why my heart should have warmed to thee as it has done; yet if ever thou wantest a friend,—seek him"—and the soldier's voice sank into a whisper—"in Walter de Montreal."

Ere the page recovered his surprise at that redoubted name, which his earliest childhood had been taught to dread, the Knight of St. John had vanished amongst the crowd.

CHAPTER IX.

ALBORNOZ AND NINA.

BUT the eyes which, above all others, thirsted for a glimpse of the released captive were forbidden that delight. Alone in her chamber, Nina awaited the result of the trial. She heard the shouts, the exclamations, the tramp of thousands along the street; she felt that the victory was won; and, her heart long

overcharged, she burst into passionate tears. The return of Angelo soon acquainted her with all that had passed; but it somewhat chilled her joy to find Rienzi was the guest of the dreaded Cardinal. That shock, in which certainty, however happy, replaces suspense, had so powerful an effect on her frame, joined to her loathing fear of a visit from the Cardinal, that she became for three days alarmingly ill; and it was only on the fifth day from that which saw Rienzi endowed with the rank of Senator of Rome, that she was recovered sufficiently to admit Albornoz to her presence.

The Cardinal had sent daily to inquire after her health, and his inquiries, to her alarmed mind, had appeared to insinuate a pretension to the right to make them. Meanwhile Albornoz had had enough to divert and occupy his thoughts. Having bought off the formidable Montreal from the service of John di Vico, one of the ablest and fiercest enemies of the Church, he resolved to march to the territories of that tyrant as expeditiously as possible, and so not to allow him time to obtain the assistance of any other band of the mercenary adventurers who found Italy the market for their valour. Occupied with raising troops, procuring money, corresponding with the various free states, and establishing alliances in aid of his ulterior and more ambitious projects at the court of Avignon, the Cardinal waited with tolerable resignation the time when he might claim from the Signora Cesarini the reward to which he deemed himself entitled. Meanwhile he had held his first conversations with Rienzi, and, under the semblance of courtesy to the acquitted Tribune, Albornoz had received him as his guest, in order to make himself master of the character and disposition of one in whom he sought a minister and a tool. That miraculous and magic art, attested by the historians of the time, which Rienzi possessed over every one with whom he came into contact, however various in temper, station, or opinions, had not deserted him in his interview with the Pontiff. So faithfully had he described the true condition of Rome, so logically had he traced the causes and the remedies of the evils she endured, so sanguinely had he spoken of his own capacities for administering her affairs, and so brilliantly had he painted the prospects which that administration opened to the

weal of the Church, and the interests of the Pope, that Innocent, though a keen and shrewd, and somewhat sceptical calculator of human chances, was entirely fascinated by the eloquence of the Roman.

"Is this the man," he is reported to have said, "whom for twelve months we have treated as a prisoner and a criminal? Would that it were on his shoulders only that the Christian empire reposed!"

At the close of the interview he had, with every mark of favour and distinction, conferred upon Rienzi the rank of Senator, which, in fact, was that of Viceroy of Rome, and had willingly acceded to all the projects which the enterprising Rienzi had once more formed—not only for recovering the territories of the Church, but for extending the dictatorial sway of the Seven-hilled City over the old dependencies of Italy.

Albornoz, to whom the Pope retailed this conversation, was somewhat jealous of the favour the new Senator had so suddenly acquired, and immediately on his return home sought an interview with his guest. In his heart, the Lord Cardinal, emphatically a man of action and business, regarded Rienzi as one rather cunning than wise—rather fortunate than great—a mixture of the pedant and the demagogue. But after a long and scrutinizing conversation with the new Senator, even he yielded to the spell of his enchanting and master intellect. Reluctantly Albornoz confessed to himself that Rienzi's rise was not the thing of chance; yet more reluctantly he perceived that the Senator was one whom he might treat with as an equal, but could not rule as a minion. And he entertained serious doubts whether it would be wise to reinstate him in a power which he evinced the capacity to wield and the genius to extend. Still, however, he did not repent the share he had taken in Rienzi's acquittal. His presence in a camp so thinly peopled was a matter greatly to be desired. And through his influence, the Cardinal more than ever trusted to enlist the Romans in favour of his enterprise for the recovery of the territory of St. Peter!

Rienzi, who panted once more to behold his Nina, endeared to him by trial and absence, as by fresh bridal, was not however able to discover the name she had assumed at Avignon;

and his residence with the Cardinal, closely but respectfully watched as he was, forbade Nina all opportunity of corresponding with him. Some half bantering hints which Albornoz had dropped upon the interest taken in his welfare by the most celebrated beauty of Avignon, had filled him with a vague alarm which he trembled to acknowledge even to himself. But the *volto sciolto*¹ which, in common with all Italian politicians, concealed whatever were his *pensieri stretti*, enabled him to baffle completely the jealous and lynxlike observation of the Cardinal. Nor had Alvarez been better enabled to satisfy the curiosity of his master. He had indeed sought the page Villani, but the imperious manner of that wayward and haughty boy had cut short all attempts at cross-examination. And all he could ascertain was, that the real Angelo Villani was not the Angelo Villani who had visited Rienzi.

Trusting at last that he should learn all, and inflamed by such passion and such hope as he was capable of feeling, Albornoz now took his way to the Cesarini's palace.

He was ushered with due state into the apartment of the Signora. He found her pale, and with the traces of illness upon her noble and statue-like features. She rose as he entered; and when he approached, she half bent her knee, and raised his hand to her lips. Surprised and delighted at a reception so new, the Cardinal hastened to prevent the condescension; retaining both her hands, he attempted gently to draw them to his heart.

"Fairest!" he whispered, "couldst thou know how I have mourned thy illness—and yet it has but left thee more lovely, as the rain only brightens the flower. Ah! happy if I have promoted thy lightest wish, and if in thine eyes I may henceforth seek at once an angel to guide me and a paradise to reward."

Nina, releasing her hand, waved it gently, and motioned the Cardinal to a seat. Seating herself at a little distance, she then spoke with great gravity and downcast eyes.

"My Lord, it is your intercession, joined to his own innocence, that has released from yonder tower the elected governor of the

¹ *Volto sciolto, pensieri stretti*—the countenance open, the thoughts restrained.

people of Rome. But freedom is the least of the generous gifts you have conferred; there is a greater in a fair name vindicated and rightful honours re-bestowed. For this, I rest ever your debtor; for this, if I bear children, they shall be taught to bless your name; for this the historian who recalls the deeds of this age, and the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi, shall add a new chaplet to the wreaths you have already won. Lord Cardinal, I may have erred. I may have offended you—you may accuse me of woman's artifice. Speak not, wonder not, hear me out. I have but one excuse, when I say that I held justified any means short of dishonour, to save the life and restore the fortunes of Cola di Rienzi. Know, my lord, that she who now addresses you is his wife."

The Cardinal remained motionless and silent. But his sallow countenance grew flushed from the brow to the neck, and his thin lips quivered for a moment, and then broke into a withering and bitter smile. At length he rose from his seat, very slowly, and said, in a voice trembling with passion—

"It is well, madam. Giles d'Albornoz has been, then, a puppet in the hands, a stepping-stone in the rise, of the plebeian demagogue of Rome. You but played upon me for your own purposes; and nothing short of a Cardinal of Spain, and a Prince of the royal blood of Aragon, was meet to be the instrument of a mountebank's juggle! Madam, yourself and your husband might justly be accused of ambition——"

"Cease, my lord," said Nina, with unspeakable dignity; "whatever offence has been committed against you was mine alone. Till after our last interview, Rienzi knew not even of my presence at Avignon."

"At our last interview, lady (you do well to recall it)! methinks there was a hinted and implied contract. I have fulfilled my part—I claim yours. Mark me! I do not forego that claim. As easily as I rend this glove can I rend the parchment which proclaims thy husband 'the Senator of Rome.' The dungeon is not death, and its door will open *twice*."

"My lord—my lord!" cried Nina, sick with terror, "wrong not so your noble nature, your great name, your sacred rank, your chivalric blood. You are of the knightly race of Spain,

yours not the sullen, low, and inexorable vices that stain the petty tyrants of this unhappy land. You are no Visconti—no Castracani—you cannot stain your laurels with revenge upon a woman. Hear me," she continued, and she fell abruptly at his feet; "men dupe, deceive our sex—and for selfish purposes; they are pardoned—even by their victims. Did *I* deceive you with a false hope? Well—what my object?—what my excuse? My husband's liberty—my land's salvation! Woman,—my lord, alas, your sex too rarely understand her weakness or her greatness! Erring—all human as she is to others—God gifts her with a thousand virtues to the one she loves! It is from that love that she alone drinks her nobler nature. For the hero of her worship she has the meekness of the dove—the devotion of the saint; for his safety in peril, for his rescue in misfortune, her vain sense imbibes the sagacity of the serpent—her weak heart, the courage of the lioness! It is this which, in absence, made me mask my face in smiles, that the friends of the houseless exile might not despair of his fate—it is this which brought me through forests beset with robbers, to watch the stars upon yon solitary tower—it was this which led my steps to the revels of your hated court—this which made me seek a deliverer in the noblest of its chiefs—it is this which has at last opened the dungeon door to the prisoner now within your halls; and this, Lord Cardinal," added Nina, rising, and folding her arms upon her heart—"this, if your anger seeks a victim, will inspire me to die without a groan,—but without dishonour!"

Albornoz remained rooted to the ground. Amazement—emotion—admiration—all busy at his heart. He gazed at Nina's flashing eyes and heaving bosom as a warrior of old upon a prophetess inspired. His eyes were riveted to hers as by a spell. He tried to speak, but his voice failed him. Nina continued:

"Yes, my lord; these are no idle words! If you seek revenge, it is in your power. Undo what you have done. Give Rienzi back to the dungeon, or to disgrace, and you are avenged; but not on *him*. All the hearts of Italy shall become to him a second Nina! I am the guilty one, and I the sufferer. Hear me swear—in that instant which sees new wrong to Rienzi, this hand is my executioner. —My lord, I supplicate you no longer!"

Albornoz continued deeply moved. Nina but rightly judged him, when she distinguished the aspiring Spaniard from the barbarous and unrelenting voluptuaries of Italy. Despite the profligacy that stained his sacred robe—despite all the acquired and increasing callousness of a hard, scheming, and sceptical man, cast amidst the worst natures of the worst of times—there lingered yet in his soul much of the knightly honour of his race and country. High thoughts and daring spirits touched a congenial string in his heart, and not the less, in that he had but rarely met them in his experience of camps and courts. For the first time in his life, he felt that he had seen the woman who could have contented him even with wedlock, and taught him the proud and faithful love of which the minstrels of Spain had sung. He sighed, and still gazing on Nina, approached her, almost reverentially; he knelt and kissed the hem of her robe. “Lady,” he said, “I would I could believe that you have altogether read my nature aright; but I were indeed lost to all honour, and unworthy of gentle birth, if I still harboured a single thought against the peace and virtue of one like thee. Sweet heroine,”—he continued—“so lovely, yet so pure—so haughty, and yet so soft—thou hast opened to me the brightest page these eyes have ever scanned in the blotted volume of mankind. Mayest thou have such happiness as life can give; but souls such as thine make their nest like the eagle, upon rocks and amidst the storms. Fear me no more—think of me no more—unless hereafter, when thou hearest men speak of Giles d’Albornoz, thou mayest say in thine own heart,” and here the Cardinal’s lip curled with scorn—“he did not renounce every feeling worthy of a man, when Ambition and Fate endued him with the surplice of the priest.”

The Spaniard was gone before Nina could reply.

BOOK VIII.

THE GRAND COMPANY.

Montreal nourrissoit de plus vastes projets il donnoit à sa campagne un gouvernement régulier. . . . Par cette discipline il faisoit régner l'abondance dans son camp : les gens de guerre ne parloient, en Italie, que des richesses qu'on acquéroit à son service.—SISMONDI, *Hist. des Républiques Italiennes*, tom. vi. c. 42.

Montreal cherished more vast designs he subjected his company to a regular system of government. . . . By means of this discipline he kept his camp abundantly supplied, and military adventurers in Italy talked of nothing but the wealth won in his service.—SISMONDI'S *Hist. of Ital. Republics*.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENCAMPMENT.

IT was a most lovely day, in the very glow and meridian of an Italian summer, when a small band of horsemen were seen winding a hill which commanded one of the fairest landscapes of Tuscany. At their head was a Cavalier in a complete suit of chain armour, the links of which were so fine, that they resembled a delicate and curious network, but so strongly compacted, that they would have resisted spear or sword no less effectually than the heaviest corselet, while adapting themselves exactly and with ease to every movement of the light and graceful shape of the rider. He wore a hat of dark green velvet shaded by long plumes, while of two squires behind, the one bore his helmet and lance, the other led a strong war-horse, completely cased in plates of mail, which seemed, however, scarcely to encumber its proud and agile paces. The countenance of the Cavalier was comely, but strongly marked, and darkened, by long exposure to the suns of

many climes, to a deep bronze hue : a few raven ringlets escaped from beneath his hat down a cheek closely shaven. The expression of his features was grave and composed even to sadness ; nor could all the loveliness of the unrivalled scene before him dispel the quiet and settled melancholy of his eyes. Besides the squires, ten horsemen, armed cap-à-pié, attended the knight ; and the low and murmured conversation they carried on at intervals, as well as their long fair hair, large stature, thick short beards, and the studied and accurate equipment of their arms and steeds, bespoke them of a hardier and more warlike race than the children of the south. The cavalcade was closed with a man almost of gigantic height, bearing a banner richly decorated, wherein was wrought a column, with the inscription, "ALONE AMIDST RUINS." Fair indeed was the prospect which with every step expanded yet more widely its various beauty. Right before stretched a long vale, now covered with green woodlands glittering in the yellow sunlight, now opening into narrow plains bordered by hillocks, from whose mosses of all hues grew fantastic and odorous shrubs ; while, winding amidst them, a broad and silver stream broke into light at frequent intervals, snatched by wood and hillock from the eye, only to steal upon it again, in sudden and bright surprise. The opposite slope of gentle mountains, as well as that which the horsemen now descended, was covered with vineyards, trained in alleys and arcades : and the clustering grape laughed from every leafy and glossy covert, as gaily as when the Fauns held a holiday in the shade. The eye of the Cavalier roved listlessly over this enchanting prospect, sleeping in the rosiest light of a Tuscan heaven, and then became fixed with a more earnest attention on the grey and frowning walls of a distant castle, which, high upon the steepest of the opposite mountains, overlooked the valley.

"Behold," he muttered to himself, "how every Eden in Italy hath its curse ! Wherever the land smiles fairest, be sure to find the brigand's tent and the tyrant's castle !"

Scarce had these thoughts passed his mind, ere the shrill and sudden blast of a bugle that sounded close amongst the vineyards by the side of the path, startled the whole group. The cavalcade halted abruptly. The leader made a gesture to the

squire who led his war-horse. The noble and practised animal remained perfectly still, save by champing its bit restlessly, and moving its quick ear to and fro, as aware of a coming danger,—while the squire, unencumbered by the heavy armour of the Germans, plunged into the thicket and disappeared. He returned in a few minutes, already heated and breathless.

“We must be on our guard,” he whispered; “I see the glimmer of steel through the vine leaves.”

“Our ground is unhappily chosen,” said the Knight, hastily bracing on his helmet and leaping on his charger; and waving his hand towards a broader space in the road, which would permit the horsemen more room to act in union, with his small band he made hastily to the spot—the armour of the soldiers rattling heavily as two by two they proceeded on.

The space to which the Cavalier had pointed was a green semi-circle of several yards in extent, backed by tangled copses of brushwood sloping down to the vale below. They reached it in safety; they drew up breast to breast in the form of a crescent: every visor closed save that of the Knight, who looked anxiously and keenly round the landscape.

“Hast thou heard, Giulio,” he said to his favourite squire (the only Italian of the band), “whether any brigands have been seen lately in these parts?”

“No, my lord; on the contrary, I am told that every lance hath left the country to join the Grand Company of Fra Moreale. The love of his pay and plunder has drawn away the mercenaries of every Tuscan Signor.”

As he ceased speaking, the bugle sounded again from nearly the same spot as before; it was answered by a brief and martial note from the very rear of the horsemen. At the same moment, from the thickets behind, broke the gleam of mail and spears. One after another, rank after rank, from the copse behind them, emerged men-at-arms, while suddenly, from the vines in front, still greater numbers poured forth with loud and fierce shouts.

“For God, for the Emperor, and for the Colonna!” cried the Knight, closing his visor; and the little band, closely serried, the lance in every rest, broke upon the rush of the enemy in front. A score or so, borne to the ground by the charge, cleared a path

for the horsemen, and, without waiting the assault of the rest, the Knight wheeled his charger and led the way down the hill, almost at full gallop, despite the roughness of the descent: a flight of arrows despatched after them fell idly on their iron mail.

"If they have no horse," cried the Knight, "we are saved!"

And, indeed, the enemy seemed scarcely to think of pursuing them; but (gathered on the brow of a hill) appeared contented to watch their flight.

Suddenly a curve in the road brought them before a broad and wide patch of waste land, which formed almost a level surface, interrupting the descent of the mountain. On the commencement of this waste, drawn up in still array, the sunlight broke on the breastplates of a long line of horsemen, whom the sinuosities of the road had hitherto concealed from the Knight and his party.

The little troop halted abruptly—retreat—advance alike cut off; gazing first at the foe before them, that remained still as a cloud, every eye was then turned towards the Knight.

"An thou wouldst, my lord," said the leader of the Northmen, perceiving the irresolution of their chief, "we will fight to the last. You are the only Italian I ever knew whom I would willingly die for!"

This rude profession was received with a sympathetic murmur from the rest, and the soldiers drew closer around the Knight. "Nay, my brave fellows," said the Colonna, lifting his visor, "it is not in so inglorious a field, after such various fortunes, that we are doomed to perish. If these be brigands, as we must suppose, we can yet purchase our way. If the troops of some signor, we are strangers to the feud in which he is engaged. Give me yon banner—I will ride on to them."

"Nay, my lord," said Giulio; "such marauders do not always spare a flag of truce. There is danger——"

"For that reason your leader braves it. Quick!"

The Knight took the banner, and rode deliberately up to the horsemen. On approaching, his warlike eye could not but admire the perfect caparison of their arms, the strength and beauty of their steeds, and the steady discipline of their long and glittering line.

As he rode up, and his gorgeous banner gleamed in the noonlight, the soldiers saluted him. It was a good omen, and he hailed it as such. "Fair sirs," said the Knight, "I come, at once herald and leader of the little band who have just escaped the unlooked for assault of armed men on yonder hill—and, claiming aid, as knight from knight, and soldier from soldier, I place my troop under the protection of your leader. Suffer me to see him."

"Sir Knight," answered one, who seemed the captain of the band, "sorry am I to detain one of your gallant bearing, and still more so, on recognising the device of one of the most potent houses of Italy. But our orders are strict, and we must bring all armed men to the camp of our General."

"Long absent from my native land, I knew not," replied the Knight, "that there was war in Tuscany. Permit me to crave the name of the General whom ye speak of, and that of the foe against whom ye march."

The Captain smiled slightly.

"Walter de Montreal is the General of the Grand Company, and Florence his present foe."

"We have fallen, then, into friendly, if fierce, hands," replied the Knight, after a moment's pause. "To Sir Walter de Montreal I am known of old. Permit me to return to my companions, and acquaint them that if accident has made us prisoners, it is, at least, only to the most skilful warrior of his day that we are condemned to yield."

The Italian then turned his horse to join his comrades.

"A fair knight and a bold presence," said the Captain of the Companions to his neighbour, "though I scarce think it is the party we are ordered to intercept. Praised be the Virgin, however, his men seem from the North. Them, perhaps, we may hope to enlist."

The Knight now, with his comrades, rejoined the troop. And, on receiving their parole not to attempt escape, a detachment of thirty horsemen were despatched to conduct the prisoners to the encampment of the Grand Company.

Turning from the main road, the Knight found himself conducted into a narrow defile between the hills, which, succeeded

by a gloomy tract of wild forest-land, brought the party at length into a full and abrupt view of a wide plain, covered with the tents of what, for Italian warfare, was considered a mighty army. A stream, over which rude and hasty bridges had been formed from the neighbouring timber, alone separated the horsemen from the encampment.

"A noble sight!" said the captive Cavalier, with enthusiasm, as he reined in his steed, and gazed upon the wild and warlike streets of canvas, traversing each other in vistas broad and regular.

One of the captains of the Grand Company who rode beside him smiled complacently.

"There are few masters of the martial art who equal Fra Moreale," said he; "and savage, reckless, and gathered from all parts and all countries—from cavern and from market-place, from prison and from palace, as are his troops, he has reduced them already into a discipline which might shame even the soldiery of the Empire."

The Knight made no reply; but, spurring his horse over one of the rugged bridges, soon found himself amidst the encampment. But that part at which he entered, little merited the praises bestowed upon the discipline of the army. A more unruly and disorderly array, the Cavalier, accustomed to the stern regularity of English, French, and German discipline, thought he had never beheld. Here and there, fierce, unshaven, half-naked brigands might be seen, driving before them the cattle which they had just collected by predatory excursions. Sometimes a knot of dissolute women stood—chattering, scolding, gesticulating—collected round groups of wild shagged Northmen, who, despise the bright purity of the summer-noon, were already engaged in deep potations. Oaths and laughter, and drunken merriment and fierce brawl, rang from side to side; and ever and anon some hasty conflict with drawn knives was begun and finished by the fiery bravoës of Calabria or the Apennines, before the very eyes and almost in the very path of the troop. Tumblers, and mountebanks, and jugglers, and Jew pedlars, were exhibiting their tricks or their wares at every interval, apparently well inured to the lawless and turbulent

market in which they exercised their several callings. Despite the protection of the horsemen who accompanied them, the prisoners were not allowed to pass without molestation. Groups of urchins, squalid, fierce, and ragged, seemed to start from the ground, and surrounded their horses like swarms of bees, uttering the most discordant cries; and, with the gesture of savages, rather demanding than beseeching money, which, when granted, seemed only to render them more insatiable. While, sometimes mingled with the rest, were seen the bright eyes and olive cheek, and half-pleading, half-laughing smile of girls, whose extreme youth, scarce emerged from childhood, rendered doubly striking their utter and unredeemed abandonment.

"You did not exaggerate the decorum of the Grand Company!" cried the Knight, gravely, to his new acquaintance.

"Signor," replied the other, "you must not judge of the kernel by the shell. We are scarcely yet arrived at the camp. These are the outskirts, occupied rather by the rabble than the soldiers. Twenty thousand men from the sink, it must be owned, of every town in Italy, follow the camp, to fight if necessary, but rather for plunder and for forage:—such you now behold. Presently you will see those of another stamp."

The Knight's heart swelled high. "And to such men is Italy given up!" thought he. His reverie was broken by a loud burst of applause from some convivialists hard by. He turned, and under a long tent, and round a board covered with wine and viands, sate some thirty or forty bravoos. A ragged minstrel, or jongleur, with an immense beard and mustachios, was tuning, with no inconsiderable skill, a lute which had accompanied him in all his wanderings—and suddenly changing its notes into a wild and warlike melody, he commenced in a loud and deep voice the following song:—

THE PRAISE OF THE GRAND COMPANY.

I.

Ho, dark one from the golden South,—

Ho, fair one from the North;

Ho, coat of mail and spear of sheen—

Ho, wherefore ride ye forth?

"We come from mount, we come from cave,
 We come across the sea,
 In long array, in bright array,
 To Montreal's Companiè."
 Oh, the merry, merry, band,
 Light heart and heavy hand—
 Oh, the Lances of the Free !

2.

Ho, Princes of the castled height—
 Ho, burghers of the town ;
 Apulia's strength, Romagna's pride,
 And Tusca's old renown !
 Why quail ye thus ? why pale ye thus ?
 What spectre do ye see ?
 "The blood-red flag, and trampling march,
 Of Montreal's Companiè."
 Oh, the sunshine of your life—
 Oh, the thunders of your strife !
 Wild Lances of the Free !

3.

Ho, scutcheons o'er the vaulted tomb
 Where Norman valour sleeps,
 Why shake ye so ? why quake ye so ?
 What wind the trophy sweeps ?
 "We shake without a breath—below
 The dead are stirred to see,
 The Norman's fame revived again
 In Montreal's Companiè."
 Since Roger won his crown,
 Who hath equalled your renown,
 Brave Lances of the Free ?

4.

Ho, ye who seek to win a name,
 Where deeds are bravest done—
 Ho, ye who wish to pile a heap,
 Where gold is lightest won ;
 Ho, ye who loath the stagnant life,
 Or shun the law's decree,
 Belt on the brand, and spur the steed,
 To Montreal's Companiè.
 And the maid shall share her rest,
 And the miser share his chest,
 With the Lances of the Free !
 The Free !
 The Free !
 Oh ! the Lances of the Free !

Then suddenly, as if inspired to a wilder flight by his own minstrelsy, the jongleur, sweeping his hand over the chords, broke forth into an air admirably expressive of the picture which his words, running into a rude, but lively and stirring doggerel, attempted to paint.

THE MARCH OF THE GRAND COMPANY.

Tirà, tiralà—trumpet and drum—
 Rising bright o'er the height of the mountain they come!
 German, and Hun, and the Islandrie,
 Who routed the Frenchman at famed Cressiè,
 When the rose changed its hue with the *fleur-de-lis*;
 With the Roman, and Lombard, and Piedmontese,
 And the dark-haired son of the southern seas.
Tirà, tiralà—more near and near
 Down the steep—see them sweep;—rank by rank they appear!
 With the Cloud of the Crowd hanging dark at their rear—
 Serried, and steadied, and orderliè,
 Like the course—like the force—of a marching sea!
 Open your gates and out with your gold,
 For the blood must be spilt, or the ransom be told!
 Woe, Burghers, woe! Behold them led
 By the stoutest arm and the wisest head,
 With the snow-white cross on the cloth of red;—
 With the eagle eye, and the lion port,
 His barb for a throne, and his camp for a court:
 Sovereign and scourge of the land is he—
 The kingly Knight of the Companiè!
 Hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!
 Hurrah for the army—hurrah for its lord—
 Hurrah for the gold that is got by the sword—
 Hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!
 For the Lances of the Free!

Shouted by the full chorus of those desperate boon-companions, and caught up and re-echoed from side to side, near and far, as the familiar and well-known words of the burthen reached the ears of more distant groups or stragglers, the effect of this fierce and licentious minstrelsy was indescribable. It was impossible not to feel the zest which that daring life imparted to its daring followers, and even the gallant and stately Knight who listened to it, reproved himself for an involuntary thrill of sympathy and pleasure.

He turned with some impatience and irritation to his companion, who had taken a part in the chorus, and said, "Sir, to the ears of an Italian noble, conscious of the miseries of his country, this ditty is not welcome. I pray you, let us proceed."

"I humbly crave your pardon, Signor," said the Free Companion; "but really so attractive is the life led by Free Lances, under Fra Moreale, that sometimes we forget the —; but pardon me, we will on."

A few moments more, and bounding over a narrow circumvallation, the party found themselves in a quarter, animated indeed, but of a wholly different character of animation. Long lines of armed men were drawn up on either side of a path, conducting to a large marquee, placed upon a little hillock, surmounted by a blue flag, and up this path armed soldiers were passing to and fro with great order, but with a pleased and complacent expression upon their swarthy features. Some that repaired to the marquee were bearing packets and bales upon their shoulders—those that returned seemed to have got rid of their burthens, but every now and then, impatiently opening their hands, appeared counting and recounting to themselves the coins contained therein.

The Knight looked inquiringly at his companion.

"It is the marquee of the merchants," said the captain; "they have free admission to the camp, and their property and persons are rigidly respected. They purchase each soldier's share of the plunder at fair prices, and either party is contented with the bargain."

"It seems, then, that there is some kind of rude justice observed amongst you," said the Knight.

"Rude! *Diavolo!* Not a town in Italy but would be glad of such even justice and such impartial laws. Yonder lie the tents of the judges, appointed to try all offences of soldier against soldier. To the right, the tent with the golden ball contains the treasurer of the army. Fra Moreale incurs no arrears with his soldiery."

It was, indeed, by these means that the Knight of St. John had collected the best equipped and the best contented force in Italy. Every day brought him recruits. Nothing was spoken of amongst the mercenaries of Italy but the wealth acquired in his service, and every warrior in the pay of Republic or of Tyrant sighed for the lawless standard of Fra Moreale. Already had exaggerated tales of the fortunes to be made in the ranks of the Great Company passed the Alps; and, even now, the Knight, penetrating farther into the camp, beheld from many a tent the proud banners and armorial blazon of German nobility and Gallic knighthood.

"You see," said the Free Companion, pointing to these insignia, "we are not without our different ranks in our wild city. And while we speak, many a golden spur is speeding hitherward from the North!"

All now in the quarter they had entered was still and solemn; only afar came the mingled hum, or the sudden shout of the pandemonium in the rear, mellowed by distance to a not unpleasing sound. An occasional soldier, crossing their path, stalked silently and stealthily to some neighbouring tent, and seemed scarcely to regard their approach.

"Behold! we are before the General's pavilion," said the Free Lance.

Blazoned with purple and gold, the tent of Montreal lay a little apart from the rest. A brooklet from the stream they had crossed murmured gratefully on the ear, and a tall and wide-spreading beech cast its shadow over the gorgeous canvas.

While his troop waited without, the Knight was conducted at once to the presence of the formidable adventurer.

CHAPTER II.

ADRIAN ONCE MORE THE GUEST OF MONTREAL.

MONTREAL was sitting at the head of a table, surrounded by men, some military, some civil, whom he called his councillors, and with whom he apparently debated all his projects. These men, drawn from various cities, were intimately acquainted with the internal affairs of the several states to which they belonged. They could tell to a fraction the force of a signor, the wealth of a merchant, the power of a mob. And thus, in his lawless camp, Montreal presided, not more as a general than a statesman. Such knowledge was invaluable to the chief of the Great Company. It enabled him to calculate exactly the time to attack a foe, and the sum to demand for a suppression of hostilities. He knew what parties to deal with—where to importune—where to forbear. And it usually happened that, by some secret

intrigue, the appearance of Montreal's banner before the walls of a city was the signal for some sedition or some broil within. It may be that he thus also promoted an ulterior, as well as his present, policy.

The divan were in full consultation when an officer entered, and whispered a few words in Montreal's ear. His eyes brightened. "Admit him," he said hastily. "Messires," he added to his councillors, rubbing his hands, "I think our net has caught our bird. Let us see."

At this moment the drapery was lifted and the Knight admitted.

"How!" muttered Montreal, changing colour, and in evident disappointment. "Am I to be ever thus balked?"

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said the prisoner, "I am once more your guest. In these altered features you perhaps scarcely recognise Adrian di Castello."

"Pardon me, noble Signor," said Montreal, rising with great courtesy; "the mistake of my varlets disturbed my recollection for a moment. I rejoice once more to press a hand that has won so many laurels since last we parted. Your renown has been grateful to my ears. Ho!" continued the chieftain, clapping his hands, "see to the refreshment and repose of this noble Cavalier and his attendants. Lord Adrian, I will join you presently."

Adrian withdrew. Montreal, forgetful of his councillors, traversed his tent with hasty strides; then summoning the officer who had admitted Adrian, he said, "Count Landau still keeps the pass?"

"Yes, General!"

"Hie thee fast back, then—the ambuscade must tarry till nightfall. We have trapped the wrong fox."

The officer departed, and shortly afterwards Montreal broke up the divan. He sought Adrian, who was lodged in a tent beside his own.

"My Lord," said Montreal, "it is true that my men had orders to stop every one on the roads towards Florence. I am at war with that city. Yet I expected a very different prisoner from you. Need I add, that you and your men are free?"

"I accept the courtesy, noble Montreal, as frankly as it is rendered. May I hope hereafter to repay it? Meanwhile permit me, without any disrespect, to say that had I learned the Grand Company was in this direction, I should have altered my course. I had heard that your arms were bent (somewhat to my mind more nobly) against Malatesta, the tyrant of Rimini!"

"They were so. He *was* my foe; he *is* my tributary. We conquered him. He paid us the price of his liberty. We marched by Asciano upon Sienna. For sixteen thousand florins we spared that city; and we now hang like a thunderbolt over Florence, which dared to send her puny aid to the defence of Rimini. Our marches are forced and rapid, and our camp in this plain but just pitched."

"I hear that the Grand Company is allied with Alborno, and that its General is secretly the soldier of the Church. Is it so?"

"Ay—Alborno and I understand one another," replied Montreal, carelessly; "and not the less so that we have a mutual foe, whom both are sworn to crush, in Visconti, the Archbishop of Milan."

"Visconti! the most potent of the Italian princes. That he has justly incurred the wrath of the Church I know—and I can readily understand that Innocent has revoked the pardon which the intrigues of the Archbishop purchased from Clement VI. But I do not see clearly why Montreal should willingly provoke so dark and terrible a foe."

Montreal smiled sternly. "Know you not," he said, "the vast ambition of that Visconti? By the Holy Sepulchre, he is precisely the enemy my soul leaps to meet! He has a genius worthy to cope with Montreal's. I have made myself master of his secret plans—they are gigantic! In a word, the Archbishop designs the conquest of all Italy. His enormous wealth purchases the corrupt—his dark sagacity ensnares the credulous—his daring valour awes the weak. Every enemy he humbles—every ally he enslaves. This is precisely the Prince whose progress Walter de Montreal must arrest. For this (he said in a whisper as to himself) is precisely the Prince who, if suffered to extend his power, will frustrate the plans and break the force of Walter de Montreal."

Adrian was silent, and for the first time a suspicion of the real nature of the Provençal's designs crossed his breast.

"But, noble Montreal," resumed the Colonna, "give me, if your knowledge serves, as no doubt it does,—give me the latest tidings of my native city. I am Roman, and Rome is ever in my thoughts."

"And well she may," replied Montreal, quickly. "Thou knowest that Alborno, as Legate of the Pontiff, led the army of the Church into the Papal Territories. He took with him Cola di Rienzi. Arrived at Monte Fiascone, crowds of Romans of all ranks hastened thither to render homage to the Tribune. The Legate was forgotten in the popularity of his companion. Whether or not Alborno grew jealous—for he is proud as Lucifer—of the respect paid to the Tribune, or whether he feared the restoration of his power, I cannot tell. But he detained him in his camp, and refused to yield him to all the solicitations and all the deputations of the Romans. Artfully, however, he fulfilled one of the real objects of Rienzi's release. Through his means he formally regained the allegiance of Rome to the Church, and by the attraction of his presence swelled his camp with Roman recruits. Marching to Viterbo, Rienzi distinguished himself greatly in deeds of arms against the tyrant¹ John di Vico. Nay, he fought as one worthy of belonging to the Grand Company. This increased the zeal of the Romans; and the city disgorged half its inhabitants to attend the person of the bold Tribune. To the entreaties of these worthy citizens (perhaps the very men who had before shut up their darling in St. Angelo) the crafty Legate merely replied, 'Arm against John di Vico—conquer the tyrants of the Territory—re-establish the patrimony of St. Peter, and Rienzi shall then be proclaimed Senator, and return to Rome.'

"These words inspired the Romans with so great a zeal, that they willingly lent their aid to the Legate. Aquapendente, Bolzena yielded, John di Vico was half reduced and half terrified into submission, and Gabrielli, the tyrant of Agobbio, has since succumbed. The glory is to the Cardinal, but the merit with Rienzi."

¹ *Vita di Cola di Rienzi.*

"And now?"

"Albornoz continued to entertain the Senator-Tribune with great splendour and fair words, but not a word about restoring him to Rome. Wearied with this suspense, I have learned by secret intelligence that Rienzi has left the camp, and betaken himself with a few attendants to Florence, where he has friends, who will provide him with arms and money to enter Rome."

"Ah then! now I guess," said Adrian, with a half smile, "for whom I was mistaken!"

Montreal blushed slightly. "Fairly conjectured!" said he.

"Meanwhile, at Rome," continued the Provençal—"at Rome, your worthy House, and that of the Orsini, being elected to the supreme power, quarrelled among themselves, and could not keep the authority they had won. Francesco Baroncelli,¹ a new demagogue, a humble imitator of Rienzi, rose upon the ruins of the peace broken by the nobles, obtained the title of Tribune, and carried about the very insignia used by his predecessor. But less wise than Rienzi, he took the anti-papal party. And the Legate was thus enabled to play the papal demagogue against the usurper. Baroncelli was a weak man, his sons committed every excess in mimicry of the highborn tyrants of Padua and Milan. Virgins violated and matrons dishonoured, somewhat contrasted the solemn and majestic decorum of Rienzi's rule;—in fine, Baroncelli fell, massacred

¹ This Baroncelli, who has been introduced to the reader in a former portion of this work, is called by Matteo Villani "a man of vile birth and little learning—he had been a Notary of the Capitol."

In the midst of the armed dissensions between the Barons, which followed the expulsion of Rienzi, Baroncelli contrived to make himself Master of the Capitol, and of what was considered an auxiliary of no common importance—viz. the *Great Bell*, by whose alarum Rienzi had so often summoned to arms the Roman people. Baroncelli was crowned Tribune, clothed in a robe of gold brocade, and invested with the *crozier*—sceptre of Rienzi. At first, his cruelty against the great took the appearance of protection to the humble; but the excesses of his sons (not exaggerated in the text), and his own brutal but bold ferocity, soon made him execrated by the people, to whom he owed his elevation. He had the folly to declare against the Pope; and this it really was that mainly induced Innocent to restore, and oppose to their new demagogue, the former and more illustrious Tribune. Baroncelli, like Rienzi, was excommunicated; and in his instance, also, the curse of the Church was the immediate cause of his downfall. In attempting flight he was massacred by the mob, December, 1353. Some, however, have maintained that he was slain in combat with Rienzi; and others, by a confusion of dates, have made him succeed to Rienzi on the death of the latter.—*Matteo Villani*, lib. iii. cap. 78. *Osservaz. Stor. di Zefirino Re. MS. Vat. Rip. dal Brevio*, ann. 1353. N. 2.

by the people. And now, if you ask what rules Rome, I answer, 'It is the hope of Rienzi.'

"A strange man, and various fortunes. What will be the end of both?"

"Swift murder to the first, and eternal fame to the last," answered Montreal, calmly. "Rienzi will be restored; that brave phoenix will wing its way through storm and cloud to its own funeral pyre: I foresee, I compassionate, I admire.—And then," added Montreal, "I look *beyond*!"

"But wherefore feel you so certain that, if restored, Rienzi must fall?"

"Is it not clear to every eye, save his whom ambition blinds? How can mortal genius, however great, rule that most depraved people by popular means? The Barons—(you know their indomitable ferocity)—wedded to abuse, and loathing every semblance to law; the Barons, humbled for a moment, will watch their occasion, and rise. The people will again desert. Or else, grown wise in one respect by experience, the new Senator will see that popular favour has a loud voice, but a recreant arm. He will, like the Barons, surround himself by foreign swords. A detachment from the Grand Company will be his courtiers; they will be his masters! To pay them the people must be taxed. Then the idol is execrated. No Italian hand can govern these hardy demons of the north; they will mutiny and fall away. A new demagogue will lead on the people, and Rienzi will be the victim. Mark my prophecy!"

"And then the '*beyond*' to which you look?"

"Utter prostration of Rome for new and long ages; God makes not two Rienzis; *or*," said Montreal, proudly, "the infusion of a new life into the worn-out and diseased frame,—the foundation of a new dynasty. Verily, when I look around me, I believe that the Ruler of nations designs the restoration of the South by the irruptions of the North; and that out of the old Franc and Germanic race will be built up the thrones of the future world!"

As Montreal thus spoke, leaning on his great war-sword, with his fair and heroic features—so different, in their frank, bold, fearless expression, from the dark and wily intellect that charac-

terises the lineaments of the South—eloquent at once with enthusiasm and thought—he might have seemed no unfitting representative of the genius of that northern chivalry of which he spake. And Adrian half fancied that he saw before him one of the old Gothic scourges of the Western World.

Their conversation was here interrupted by the sound of a trumpet, and presently an officer entering, announced the arrival of ambassadors from Florence.

“Again you must pardon me, noble Adrian,” said Montreal, “and let me claim you as my guest at least for to-night. Here you may rest secure, and on parting, my men shall attend you to the frontiers of whatsoever territory you design to visit.”

Adrian, not sorry to see more of a man so celebrated, accepted the invitation.

Left alone, he leaned his head upon his hand, and soon became lost in his reflections.

CHAPTER III.

FAITHFUL AND ILL-FATED LOVE.—THE ASPIRATIONS SURVIVE THE AFFECTIONS.

SINCE that fearful hour in which Adrian Colonna had gazed upon the lifeless form of his adored Irene, the young Roman had undergone the usual vicissitudes of a wandering and adventurous life in those exciting times. His country seemed no longer dear to him. His very rank precluded him from the post he once aspired to take in restoring the liberties of Rome; and he felt that if ever such a revolution could be consummated, it was reserved for one in whose birth and habits the people could feel sympathy and kindred, and who could lift his hand in their behalf without becoming the apostate of his order and the judge of his own House. He had travelled through various courts, and served with renown in various fields. Beloved and honoured wheresoever he fixed a temporary home, no change of scene had removed his melancholy—no new ties had chased away the memory of the Lost. In that era of passionate and poetical romance, which Petrarch represented rather than created, Love

had already begun to assume a more tender and sacred character than it had hitherto known ; it had gradually imbibed the divine spirit which it derives from Christianity, and which associates its sorrows on earth with the visions and hopes of heaven. To him who relies upon immortality, fidelity to the dead is easy; because death cannot extinguish hope, and the soul of the mourner is already half in the world to come. It is an age that desponds of a future life—representing death as an eternal separation—in which, if men grieve a while for the dead, they hasten to reconcile themselves to the living. For true is the old aphorism, that love exists not without hope. And all that romantic worship which the Hermit of Vaucluse felt, or feigned, for Laura, found its temple in the desolate heart of Adrian Colonna. He was emphatically the lover of *his time* ! Often as, in his pilgrimage from land to land, he passed the walls of some quiet and lonely convent, he seriously meditated the solemn vows, and internally resolved that the cloister should receive his maturer age. The absence of years had, however, in some degree restored the dimmed and shattered affection for his fatherland, and he desired once more to visit the city in which he first beheld Irene. “ Perhaps,” he thought, “ time may have wrought some unlooked-for change; and I may yet assist to restore my country.”

But with this lingering patriotism no ambition was mingled. In that heated stage of action, in which the desire of power seemed to stir through every breast, and Italy had become the El Dorado of wealth, or the Utopia of empire, to thousands of valiant arms and plotting minds, there was at least one breast that felt the true philosophy of the Hermit. Adrian's nature, though gallant and masculine, was singularly imbued with that elegance of temperament which recoils from rude contact, and to which a lettered and cultivated indolence is the supremest luxury. His education, his experience, and his intellect, had placed him far in advance of his age, and he looked with a high contempt on the coarse villanies and base tricks by which Italian ambition sought its road to power. The rise and fall of Rienzi, who, whatever his failings, was at least the purest and most honourable of the self-raised princes of the age, had conspired to make him despond of the success of noble, as he

recoiled from that of selfish aspirations. And the dreamy melancholy which resulted from his ill-starred love, yet more tended to wean him from the stale and hackneyed pursuits of the world. His character was full of beauty and of poetry—not the less so in that it found not a vent for its emotions in the actual occupation of the poet! Pent within, those emotions diffused themselves over all his thoughts and coloured his whole soul. Sometimes, in the blessed abstraction of his visions, he pictured to himself the lot he might have chosen had Irene lived, and fate united them—far from the turbulent and vulgar roar of Rome—but amidst some yet unpolluted solitude of the bright Italian soil. Before his eye there rose the lovely landscape—the palace by the borders of the waveless lake—the vineyards in the valley—the dark forests waving from the hill—and that home, the resort and refuge of all the minstrelsy and love of Italy, brightened by the “*Lampeggiar dell’ angelico riso*,”¹ that makes a paradise in the face we love. Often, seduced by such dreams to complete oblivion of his loss, the young wanderer started from the ideal bliss, to behold around him the solitary waste of way—or the moonlit tents of war—or, worse than all, the crowds and revels of a foreign court.

Whether or not such fancies now, for a moment, allured his meditations, conjured up, perhaps, by the name of Irene’s brother, which never sounded in his ears but to awaken ten thousand associations, the Colonna remained thoughtful and absorbed, until he was disturbed by his own squire, who, accompanied by Montreal’s servitors, ushered in his solitary but ample repast. Flasks of the richest Florentine wines—viands prepared with all the art which, alas, Italy has now lost!—goblets and salvers of gold and silver, prodigally wrought with barbaric gems—attested the princely luxury which reigned in the camp of the Grand Company. But Adrian saw in all only the spoliation of his degraded country, and felt the splendour almost as an insult. His lonely meal soon concluded, he became impatient of the monotony of his tent; and, tempted by the cool air of the descending eve, sauntered carelessly forth. He bent his steps by the side of the brooklet that curved,

¹ “The splendour of the angel smile.”—*Petrarch*.

snakelike and sparkling, by Montreal's tent ; and finding a spot somewhat solitary and apart from the warlike tenements around, flung himself by the margin of the stream.

The last rays of the sun quivered on the wave that danced musically over its stony bed ; and amidst a little copse on the opposite bank broke the brief and momentary song of such of the bolder habitants of that purple air as the din of the camp had not scared from their green retreat. The clouds lay motionless to the west, in that sky so darkly and intensely blue, never seen but over the landscapes that a Claude or a Rosa loved to paint : and dim and delicious rose-hues gathered over the grey peaks of the distant Apennines. From afar floated the hum of the camp, broken by the neigh of returning steeds ; the blast of an occasional bugle ; and, at regular intervals, by the armed tramp of the neighbouring sentry. And opposite to the left of the copse—upon a rising ground, matted with reeds, moss, and waving shrubs—were the ruins of some old Etruscan building, whose name had perished, whose very uses were unknown.

The scene was so calm and lovely, as Adrian gazed upon it, that it was scarcely possible to imagine it at that very hour the haunt of fierce and banded robbers, among most of whom the very soul of man was embruted, and to all of whom murder or rapine made the habitual occupation of life.

Still buried in his reveries, and carelessly dropping stones into the noisy rivulet, Adrian was aroused by the sound of steps.

"A fair spot to listen to the lute and the ballads of Provence," said the voice of Montreal, as the Knight of St. John threw himself on the turf beside the young Colonna.

"You retain, then, your ancient love of your national melodies," said Adrian.

"Ay, I have not yet survived *all* my youth," answered Montreal, with a slight sigh. "But somehow or other, the strains that once pleased my fancy now go too directly to my heart. So, though I still welcome jongleur and minstrel, I bid them sing their *newest* conceits. I cannot wish ever again to hear the poetry I heard when *I was young* !"

"Pardon me," said Adrian, with great interest, "but fain

would I have dared, though a secret apprehension prevented me hitherto,—fain would I have dared to question you of that lovely lady, with whom, seven years ago, we gazed at moonlight upon the odorous orange-groves and rosy waters of Terracina."

Montreal turned away his face ; he laid his hand on Adrian's arm, and murmured, in a deep and hoarse tone, "I am alone now !"

Adrian pressed his hand in silence. He felt no light shock at thus learning the death of one so gentle, so lovely, and so ill-fated.

"The vows of my knighthood," continued Montreal, "which precluded Adeline the rights of wedlock—the shame of her house—the angry grief of her mother—the wild vicissitudes of my life, so exposed to peril—the loss of her son—all preyed silently on her frame. She did not die (die is too harsh a word !), but she drooped away, and glided into heaven. Even as on a summer's morn some soft dream fleets across us, growing less and less distinct, until it fades, as it were, into light, and we awaken—so faded Adeline's parting spirit, till the daylight of God broke upon it."

Montreal paused a moment, and then resumed: "These thoughts make the boldest of us weak sometimes, and we Provençals are foolish in these matters!—God wot, she was very dear to me !"

The Knight bent down and crossed himself devoutly, his lips muttered a prayer. Strange as it may seem to our more enlightened age, so martial a garb did morality then wear, that this man, at whose word towns had blazed and torrents of blood had flowed, neither adjudged himself, nor was adjudged by the majority of his contemporaries, a criminal. His order, half monastic, half warlike, was emblematic of himself. He trampled upon man, yet humbled himself to God ; nor had all his acquaintance with the refining scepticism of Italy shaken the sturdy and simple faith of the bold Provençal. So far from recognizing any want of harmony between his calling and his creed, he held that man no true chevalier who was not as devout to the Cross as relentless with the sword.

"And you have no child save the one you lost?" asked Adrian, when he observed the wonted composure of Montreal once more returning.

"None!" said Montreal, as his brow again darkened. "No love-begotten heir of mine will succeed to the fortunes I trust yet to build. Never on earth shall I see upon the face of her child the likeness of Adeline! Yet, at Avignon, I saw a boy I would have claimed; for methought she must have looked her soul into his eyes, they were so like hers! Well, well! the Provence tree hath other branches: and some unborn nephew must be—what? The stars have not yet decided! But ambition is now the only thing in the world left me to love."

"So differently operates the same misfortune upon different characters," thought the Colonna. "To me, crowns became valueless when I could no longer dream of placing them on Irene's brow!"

The similarity of their fates, however, attracted Adrian strongly towards his host; and the two Knights conversed together with more friendship and unreserve than they had hitherto done. At length Montreal said, "By the way, I have not inquired your destination."

"I am bound to Rome," said Adrian: "and the intelligence I have learned from you incites me thitherward yet more eagerly. If Rienzi return, I may mediate successfully, perchance, between the Tribune-Senator and the nobles; and if I find my cousin, young Stefanello, now the head of our house, more tractable than his sires, I shall not despair of conciliating the less powerful Barons. Rome wants repose; and whoever governs, if he govern but with justice, ought to be supported both by prince and plebeian!"

Montreal listened with great attention, and then muttered to himself, "No, it cannot be!" He mused a little while, shading his brow with his hand, before he said aloud, "To Rome you are bound. Well, we shall meet soon amidst its ruins. Know, by the way, that my object here is already won: these Florentine merchants have acceded to my terms; they have purchased a two years' peace; to-morrow the camp breaks up, and the Grand Company march to Lombardy. There, if my schemes

prosper, and the Venetians pay my price, I league the rascals (under Landau, my lieutenant) with the Sea-City, in defiance of the Visconti, and shall pass my autumn in peace amidst the pomps of Rome."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," said Adrian, "your frankness perhaps makes me presumptuous; but when I hear you talk, like a huxtering trader, of selling alike your friendship and your forbearance, I ask myself 'Is this the great Knight of St. John; and have men spoken of him fairly, when they assert the sole stain on his laurels to be his avarice?'"

Montreal bit his lip; nevertheless, he answered calmly, "My frankness has brought its own penance, Lord Adrian. However, I cannot wholly leave so honoured a guest under an impression which I feel to be plausible, but not just. No, brave Colonna; report wrongs me. I value Gold, for Gold is the Architect of Power! It fills the camp—it storms the city—it buys the market place—it raises the palace—it founds the throne. I value Gold,—it is the means necessary to my end!"

"And that end——"

"Is—no matter what," said the Knight coldly. "Let us to our tents, the dews fall heavily, and the *malaria* floats over these houseless wastes."

The pair rose;—yet, fascinated by the beauty of the hour, they lingered for a moment by the brook. The earliest stars shone over its crisping wavelets, and a delicious breeze murmured gently amidst the glossy herbage.

"Thus gazing," said Montreal, softly, "we reverse the old Medusan fable the poets tell us of, and look and muse ourselves out of stone. A little while, and it was the *sunlight* that gilded the wave—it now shines as brightly and glides as gaily beneath the stars; even so rolls the stream of time; one luminary succeeds the other equally welcomed—equally illumining—equally evanescent! You see, the poetry of Provence still lives beneath my mail!"

Adrian early sought his couch; but his own thoughts and the sounds of loud mirth that broke from Montreal's tent, where the chief feasted the captains of his band, a revel from which he had the delicacy to excuse the Roman noble, kept the Colonna long

awake; and he had scarcely fallen into an unquiet slumber, when yet more discordant sounds again invaded his repose. At the earliest dawn the wide armament was astir—the creaking of cordage—the tramp of men—loud orders and louder oaths—the slow rolling of baggage-wains—and the clank of the armourers, announced the removal of the camp, and the approaching departure of the Grand Company.

Ere Adrian was yet attired, Montreal entered his tent.

“I have appointed,” he said, “five score lances under a trusty leader, to accompany you, noble Adrian, to the borders of Romagna; they wait your leisure. In another hour I depart; the on-guard are already in motion.”

Adrian would fain have declined the proffered escort; but he saw that it would only offend the pride of the chief, who soon retired. Hastily Adrian endued his arms—the air of the fresh morning, and the glad sun rising gorgeously from the hills, revived his wearied spirit. He repaired to Montreal’s tent, and found him alone, with the implements of writing before him, and a triumphant smile upon his countenance.

“Fortune showers new favours on me!” he said gaily. “Yesterday the Florentines spared me the trouble of a siege: and to-day (even since I last saw you—a few minutes since) puts your new Senator of Rome into my power!”

“How! have your bands then arrested Rienzi?”

“Not so—better still! The Tribune changed his plan, and repaired to Perugia, where my brothers now abide—sought them—they have supplied him with money and soldiers enough to brave the perils of the way, and to defy the swords of the Barons. So writes my good brother Arimbardo, a man of letters, whom the Tribune thinks rightly he has decoyed with old tales of Roman greatness, and mighty promises of grateful advancement. You find me hastily expressing my content at the arrangement. My brothers themselves will accompany the Senator-Tribune to the walls of the Capitol.”

“Still, I see not how this places Rienzi in your power.”

“No! His soldiers are my creatures—his comrades my brothers—his creditor myself! Let him rule Rome then—the time soon comes when the Vice-Regent must yield to——”

"The Chief of the Grand Company," interrupted Adrian, with a shudder, which the bold Montreal was too engrossed with the unconcealed excitement of his own thoughts to notice. "No, Knight of Provence, basely have we succumbed to domestic tyrants: but never, I trust, will Romans be so vile as to wear the yoke of a foreign usurper."

Montreal looked hard at Adrian, and smiled sternly.

"You mistake me," said he; "and it will be time enough for you to play the Brutus when I assume the Cæsar. Meanwhile we are but host and guest. Let us change the theme."

Nevertheless this, their latter conference, threw a chill over both during the short time the Knights remained together, and they parted with a formality which was ill-suited to their friendly intercourse of the night before. Montreal felt he had incautiously revealed himself, but caution was no part of his character, whenever he found himself at the head of an army, and at the full tide of fortune; and at that moment, so confident was he of the success of his wildest schemes, that he recked little whom he offended, or whom alarmed.

Slowly, with his strange and ferocious escort, Adrian renewed his way. Winding up a steep ascent that led from the plain,—when he reached the summit, the curve in the road showed him the whole army on its march;—the gonfalons waving—the armour flashing in the sun, line after line, like a river of steel, and the whole plain bristling with the array of that moving war;—while the solemn tread of the armed thousands fell subdued and stifled at times by martial and exulting music. As they swept on, Adrian descried at length the stately and towering form of Montreal upon a black charger, distinguished even at that distance from the rest, not more by his gorgeous armour than his lofty stature. So swept he on in the pride of his array—in the flush of his hopes—the head of a mighty armament—the terror of Italy—the hero that was—the monarch that might be!

BOOK IX.

THE RETURN.

Allora la sua venuta fu a Roma sentita ; Romani si apparecchiavano a riceverlo con letizia furo fatti archi trionfali, &c.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. c. 17.

Then the fame of his coming was felt at Rome ; the Romans made ready to receive him with gladness triumphal arches were erected, &c.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE.

ALL Rome was astir!—from St. Angelo to the Capitol, windows, balconies, roofs, were crowded with animated thousands. Only here and there, in the sullen quarters of the Colonna, the Orsini, and the Savelli, reigned a death-like solitude and a dreary gloom. In those fortifications, rather than streets, not even the accustomed tread of the barbarian sentinel was heard. The gates closed—the casements barred—the grim silence around—attested the absence of the Barons. They had left the city so soon as they had learned the certain approach of Rienzi. In the villages and castles of the Campagna, surrounded by their mercenaries, they awaited the hour when the people, weary of their idol, should welcome back even those ferocious Iconoclasts.

With these exceptions, all Rome was astir ! Triumphal arches of drapery, wrought with gold and silver, raised at every principal vista, were inscribed with mottoes of welcome and rejoicing. At frequent intervals stood youths and maidens, with baskets of

flowers and laurels. High above the assembled multitudes—from the proud tower of Hadrian—from the turrets of the Capitol—from the spires of the sacred buildings dedicated to Apostle and to Saint—floated banners as for a victory. Rome once more opened her arms to receive her Tribune!

Mingled with the crowd—disguised by his large mantle—hidden by the pressure of the throng—his person, indeed, forgotten by most—and, in the confusion of the moment heeded by none—stood Adrian Colonna! He had not been able to conquer his interest for the brother of Irene. Solitary amidst his fellow-citizens, he stood—the only one of the proud race of Colonna who witnessed the triumph of the darling of the people.

“They say he has grown large in his prison,” said one of the bystanders; “he was lean enough when he came by daybreak out of the Church of St. Angelo!”

“Ay,” said another, a little man with a shrewd, restless eye, “they say truly; I saw him take leave of the Legate.”

Every eye was turned to the last speaker; he became at once a personage of importance. “Yes,” continued the little man with an elated and pompous air, “as soon, d’ye see, as he had prevailed on Messere Brettone, and Messere Arimbaldo, the brothers of Fra Moreale, to accompany him from Perugia to Monte Fiascone, he went at once to the Legate d’Albornoz, who was standing in the open air conversing with his captains. A crowd followed. I was one of them; and the Tribune nodded at me—ay, that did he!—and so, with his scarlet cloak, and his scarlet cap, he faced the proud Cardinal with a pride greater than his own. ‘Monsignore,’ said he, ‘though you accord me neither money nor arms, to meet the dangers of the road and brave the ambush of the Barons, I am prepared to depart. Senator of Rome his Holiness hath made me; according to custom, I pray you, Monsignore, forthwith to confirm the rank.’ I would you could have seen how the proud Spaniard stared, and blushed, and frowned; but he bit his lip, and said little.”

“And confirmed Rienzi Senator?”

“Yes; and blessed him, and bade him depart.”

“Senator!” said a stalwart but grey-haired giant with folded

arms; "I like not a title that has been borne by a patrician. I fear me, in the new title he will forget the old."

"Fie, Cecco del Vecchio, you were always a grumbler!" said a merchant of cloth, whose commodity the ceremonial had put in great request. "Fie!—for my part, I think Senator a less new-fangled title than Tribune. I hope there will be feastings enow, at last. Rome has been long dull. A bad time for trade, I warrant me!"

The artizan grinned scornfully. He was one of those who distinguished between the middle class and the working, and he loathed a merchant as much as he did a noble. "The day wears," said the little man; "he must be here anon. The Senator's lady, and all his train, have gone forth to meet him these two hours."

Scarce were these words uttered, when the crowd to the right swayed restlessly; and presently a horseman rode rapidly through the street. "Way there! Keep back! Way—make way for the Most Illustrious the Senator of Rome!"

The crowd became hushed—then murmuring—then hushed again. From balcony and casement stretched the neck of every gazer. The tramp of steeds was heard at a distance—the sound of clarion and trumpet;—then, gleaming through the distant curve of the streets, was seen the wave of the gonfalons—then, the glitter of spears—and then from the whole multitude as from one voice, arose the shout,—“He comes! he comes!”

Adrian shrunk yet more backward amongst the throng; and leaning against the wall of one of the houses, contemplated the approaching pageant.

First came six abreast, the procession of Roman horsemen who had gone forth to meet the Senator, bearing boughs of olive in their hands; each hundred preceded by banners, inscribed with the words, "Liberty and peace restored." As these passed the group by Adrian, each more popular citizen of the cavalcade was recognized, and received with loud shouts. By the garb and equipment of the horsemen, Adrian saw that they belonged chiefly to the traders of Rome; a race who, he well knew, unless strangely altered, valued liberty only as a commercial speculation. "A vain support these," thought the Colonna;—"what

next?" On, then, came in glittering armour the German mercenaries, hired by the gold of the Brothers of Provence, in number two hundred and fifty, and previously in the pay of Malatesta of Rimini;—tall, stern, sedate, disciplined,—eying the crowd with a look, half of barbarian wonder, half of insolent disdain. No shout of gratulation welcomed these sturdy strangers; it was evident that their aspect cast a chill over the assembly.

"Shame!" growled Cecco del Vecchio, audibly. "Has the people's friend need of the swords which guard an Orsini or a Malatesta?—shame!"

No voice this time silenced the huge malcontent.

"His only real defence against the Barons," thought Adrian, "if he pay them well! But their number is not sufficient!"

Next came two hundred fantassins, or foot-soldiers of Tuscany, with the corselets and arms of the heavy-armed soldiery—a gallant company, and whose cheerful looks and familiar bearing appeared to sympathise with the crowd. And in truth they did so,—for they were Tuscans, and therefore lovers of freedom. In them, too, the Romans seemed to recognise natural and legitimate allies,—and there was a general cry of "*Vivano i bravi Toscani!*"

"Poor defence!" thought the more sagacious Colonna; "the Barons can awe, and the mob corrupt them."

Next came a file of trumpeters and standard bearers;—and now the sound of the music was drowned by shouts which seemed to rise simultaneously as from every quarter of the city—"Rienzi! Rienzi!—Welcome, welcome!—Liberty and Rienzi! Rienzi and the Good Estate!" Flowers dropped on his path, kerchiefs and banners waved from every house;—tears might be seen coursing, unheeded, down bearded cheeks;—youth and age were kneeling together, with uplifted hands invoking blessings on the head of the Restored. On he came, the Senator-Tribune—"the *Phœnix to his pyre!*"

Robed in scarlet that literally blazed with gold, his proud head bared in the sun, and bending to the saddle-bow, Rienzi passed slowly through the throng. Not in the flush of that hour were visible on his glorious countenance the signs of disease and care: the very enlargement of his proportions gave a greater jesty to his mien. Hope sparkled in his eye—triumph and

empire sat upon his brow. The crowd could not contain themselves ; they pressed forward, each upon each, anxious to catch the glance of his eye, to touch the hem of his robe. He himself was deeply affected by their joy. He halted ; with faltering and broken words he attempted to address them. "I am repaid," he said,—*"repaid for all ;—may I live to make you happy !"*

The crowd parted again—the Senator moved on—again the crowd closed in. Behind the Tribune, to their excited imagination, seemed to move the very goddess of ancient Rome.

Upon a steed, caparisoned with cloth of gold ;—in snow-white robes, studded with gems that flashed back the day,—came the beautiful and regal Nina. The memory of her pride, her ostentation, all forgotten in that moment, she was scarce less welcome, scarce less idolised, than her lord. And her smile all radiant with joy—her lip quivering with proud and elate emotion—never had she seemed at once so born alike for love and for command ;—a Zenobia passing through the pomp of Rome,—not a captive, but a queen.

But not upon that stately form riveted the gaze of Adrian—pale, breathless, trembling, he clung to the walls against which he leaned. Was it a dream ? Had the dead revived ? Or was it his own—his living Irene—whose soft and melancholy loveliness shone sadly by the side of Nina—a star beside the moon ? The pageant faded from his eyes—all grew grim and dark. For a moment he was insensible. When he recovered, the crowd was hurrying along, confused and blent with the mighty stream that followed the procession. Through the moving multitude he caught the graceful form of Irene, again snatched by the closing standards of the procession from his view. His blood rushed back from his heart through every vein. He was as a man who for years had been in a fearful trance, and who is suddenly awakened to the light of Heaven.

One of that mighty throng remained motionless with Adrian. It was Cecco del Vecchio.

"He did not see me," muttered the smith to himself ; *"old friends are forgotten now !* Well, well, Cecco del Vecchio hates tyrants still—no matter what their name, nor how smoothly they are disguised. He did not see ME ! Umph !"

CHAPTER II.

THE MASQUERADE.

THE acuter reader has already learned, without the absolute intervention of the author as narrator, the incidents occurring to Rienzi in the interval between his acquittal at Avignon and his return to Rome. As the impression made by Nina upon the softer and better nature of Albornozy died away, he naturally began to consider his guest—as the profound politicians of that day ever considered men—a piece upon the great chess-board, to be moved, advanced, or sacrificed, as best suited the scheme in view. His purpose accomplished, in the recovery of the patrimonial territory, the submission of John di Vico, and the fall and death of the Demagogue Baroncelli, the Cardinal deemed it far from advisable to restore to Rome, and with so high a dignity, the able and ambitious Rienzi. Before the daring Roman, even his own great spirit quailed; and he was wholly unable to conceive or to calculate the policy that might be adopted by the new Senator, when once more Lord of Rome. Without affecting to detain, he therefore declined to assist in restoring him. And Rienzi thus saw himself within an easy march of Rome, without one soldier to protect him against the Barons by the way. But Heaven had decreed that no *single* man, however gifted, or however powerful, should long counteract or master the destinies of Rienzi: and perhaps in no more glittering scene of his life did he ever evince so dexterous and subtle an intellect as he now did in extricating himself from the wiles of the Cardinal. Repairing to Perugia, he had, as we have seen, procured, through the brothers of Montreal, men and money for his return. But the Knight of St. John was greatly mistaken, if he imagined that Rienzi was not thoroughly aware of the perilous and treacherous tenure of the support he had received. His keen eye read at a glance the aims and the characters of the brothers of Montreal—he knew that while affecting to serve him, they designed to control—that, made the debtor of the grasping

and aspiring Montreal, and surrounded by the troops conducted by Montreal's brethren, he was in the midst of a net which, if not broken, would soon involve fortune and life itself in its fatal and deadly meshes. But, confident in the resources and promptitude of his own genius, he yet sanguinely trusted to make those *his* puppets, who dreamed that he was their own; and, with empire for the stake, he cared not how crafty the antagonists he was compelled to engage.

Meanwhile, uniting to all his rasher and all his nobler qualities a profound dissimulation, he appeared to trust implicitly to his Provençal companions; and his first act on entering the Capitol, after the triumphal procession, was to reward with the highest dignities in his gift, Messere Arimbaldo and Messere Brettone de Montreal!

High feasting was there that night in the halls of the Capitol; but dearer to Rienzi than all the pomp of the day were the smiles of Nina. Her proud and admiring eyes, swimming with delicious tears, fixed upon his countenance, she but felt that they were re-united, and that the hours, however brilliantly illumined, were hastening to that moment, when, after so desolate and dark an absence, they might once more be alone.

Far other the thoughts of Adrian Colonna, as he sate alone in the dreary palace in the yet more dreary quarter of his haughty race. Irene then was alive,—he had been deceived by some strange error,—she had escaped the devouring pestilence; and something in the pale sadness of her gentle features, even in that day of triumph, told him he was still remembered. But as his mind by degrees calmed itself from its first wild and tumultuous rapture, he could not help asking himself the question whether they were not still to be divided? Stefanello Colonna, the grandson of the old Stephen, and (by the death of his sire and brother) the youthful head of that powerful House had already raised his standard against the Senator. Fortifying himself in the almost impregnable fastness of Palestrina, he had assembled around him all the retainers of his family, and his lawless soldiery now ravaged the neighbouring plains far and wide.

Adrian foresaw that the lapse of a few days would suffice to bring the Colonna and the Senator to open war. Could he take

part against those of his own blood? The very circumstance of his love for Irene would yet more rob such a proceeding of all appearance of disinterested patriotism, and yet more deeply and irremediably stain his knightly fame, wherever the sympathy of his equals was enlisted with the cause of the Colonna. On the other hand, not only his love for the Senator's sister, but his own secret inclinations and honest convictions, were on the side of one who alone seemed to him possessed of the desire and the genius to repress the disorders of his fallen city. Long meditating, he feared no alternative was left him but in the same cruel neutrality to which he had been before condemned; but he resolved at least to make the attempt—rendered favourable and dignified by his birth and reputation—to reconcile the contending parties. To effect this, he saw that he must begin with his haughty cousin. He was well aware that were it known that he had first obtained an interview with Rienzi—did it appear as if he were charged with overtures from the Senator—although Stefanello himself might be inclined to yield to his representations, the insolent and ferocious Barons who surrounded him would not deign to listen to the envoy of the People's chosen one; and instead of being honoured as an intercessor, he should be suspected as a traitor. He determined, then, to depart for Palestrina; but (and his heart beat audibly) would it not be possible first to obtain an interview with Irene? It was no easy enterprise, surrounded as she was, but he resolved to adventure it. He summoned Giulio.

"The Senator holds a festival this evening—think you that the assemblage will be numerous?"

"I hear," answered Giulio, "that the banquet given to the Ambassadors and Signors to-day is to be followed to-morrow by a mask, to which all ranks are admitted. By Bacchus,¹ if the Tribune only invited nobles, the smallest closet in the Capitol would suffice to receive his maskers. I suppose a mask has been resolved on in order to disguise the quality of the visitors."

Adrian mused a moment; and the result of his reverie was a determination to delay for another sun his departure to

¹ Still a common Roman expletive.

Palestrina—to take advantage of the nature of the revel, and to join the masquerade.

That species of entertainment, though unusual at that season of the year, had been preferred by Rienzi, partly and ostensibly because it was one in which all his numerous and motley supporters could be best received; but chiefly and secretly because it afforded himself and his confidential friends the occasion to mix unsuspected amongst the throng, and learn more of the real anticipations of the Romans with respect to his policy and his strength, than could well be gathered from the enthusiasm of a public spectacle.

The following night was beautifully serene and clear. The better to accommodate the numerous guests, and to take advantage of the warm and moonlit freshness of the air, the open court of the Capitol, with the place of the Lion (as well as the state apartments within) was devoted to the festival.

As Adrian entered the festive court with the rush of the throng, it chanced that in the eager impatience of some maskers, more vehement than the rest, his vizard was deranged. He hastily replaced it; but not before one of the guests had recognised his countenance.

From courtesy, Rienzi and his family remained at first unmasked. They stood at the head of the stairs to which the old Egyptian Lion gave the name. The lights shone over the colossal monument—which, torn from its antique home, had witnessed, in its grim repose, the rise and lapse of countless generations, and the dark and stormy revolutions of avenging fate. It was an ill omen, often afterwards remarked, that the place of that state festival was the place also of the state executions. But at that moment, as group after group pressed forward to win smile and word from the celebrated man, whose fortunes had been the theme of Europe, or to bend in homage to the lustrous loveliness of Nina, no omen and no warning clouded the universal gladness.

Behind Nina, well contented to shrink from the gaze of the throng, and to feel her softer beauty eclipsed by the dazzling and gorgeous charms of her brother's wife, stood Irene. Amidst the crowd, on her alone Adrian fixed his eyes. The years

which had flown over the fair brow of the girl of sixteen—then animated by, yet trembling beneath, the first wild breath of Love;—youth in every vein—passion and childish tenderness in every thought, had not marred, but they had changed, the character of Irene's beauty. Her cheek, no longer varying with every instant, was settled into a delicate and thoughtful paleness—her form, more rounded to the proportions of Roman beauty, had assumed an air of dignified and calm repose. No longer did the restless eye wander in search of some imagined object; no longer did the lip quiver into smiles at some untold hope or half-unconscious recollection. A grave and mournful expression gave to her face (still how sweet!) a gravity beyond her years. The bloom, the flush, the April of the heart, was gone; but yet neither time, nor sorrow, nor blighted love, had stolen from her countenance its rare and angelic softness—nor that inexpressible and virgin modesty of form and aspect, which, contrasting the bolder beauties of Italy, had more than aught else distinguished to Adrian, from all other women, the idol of his heart. And feeding his gaze upon those dark deep eyes, which spoke of thought far away and busy with the past, Adrian felt again and again that he was not forgotten! Hovering near her, but suffering the crowd to press one after another before him, he did not perceive that he had attracted the eagle eye of the Senator.

In fact, as one of the maskers passed Rienzi, he whispered, "Beware, a Colonna is among the masks! beneath the reveller's domino has often lurked the assassin's dagger. Yonder stands your foe—mark him!"

These words were the first sharp and thrilling intimation of the perils into which he had rushed, that the Tribune-Senator had received since his return. He changed colour slightly; and for some minutes the courtly smile and ready greeting with which he had hitherto delighted every guest, gave way to a moody abstraction.

"Why stands yon strange man so mute and motionless?" whispered he to Nina. "He speaks to none—he approaches us not—a churl, a churl!—he must be seen to."

"Doubtless some German or English barbarian," answered

Nina. "Let not, my lord, so slight a cloud dim your merriment."

"You are right, dearest; we have friends here; we are well girt. And, by my father's ashes, I feel that I must accustom myself to danger. Nina, let us move on; methinks we might now mix among the maskers—masked ourselves."

The music played loud and cheerily as the Senator and his party mingled with the throng. But still his eye turned ever towards the grey domino of Adrian, and he perceived that it followed his steps. Approaching the private entrance of the Capitol, he for a few minutes lost sight of his unwelcome pursuer; but just as he entered, turning abruptly, Rienzi perceived him close at his side—the next moment the stranger had vanished amidst the throng. But that moment had sufficed to Adrian—he had reached Irene. "Adrian Colonna (he whispered) waits thee beside the Lion."

In the absorption of his own reflections, Rienzi fortunately did not notice the sudden paleness and agitation of his sister. Entered within his palace, he called for wine—the draught revived his spirits—he listened smilingly to the sparkling remarks of Nina; and enduing his mask and disguise, said with his wonted cheerfulness, "Now for Truth—strange that in festivals it should only speak behind a vizard! My sweet sister, thou hast lost thine old smile, and I would rather see that than—Ha! has Irene vanished?"

"Only, I suppose, to change her dress, my Cola, and mingle with the revellers," answered Nina. "Let my smile atone for hers."

Rienzi kissed the bright brow of his wife as she clung fondly to his bosom. "Thy smile is the sunlight," said he; "but this girl disturbs me. Methinks *now*, at least, she might wear a gladder aspect."

"Is there nothing of love beneath my fair sister's gloom?" answered Nina. "Do you not call to mind how she loved Adrian Colonna?"

"Does that fantasy hold still?" returned Rienzi, musingly. "Well, and she is fit bride for a monarch."

"Yet it were an alliance that would, better than one with monarchs, strengthen thy power at Rome!"

"Ay, were it possible ; but that haughty race !—Perchance this very masker that so haunted our steps was but her lover. I will look to this. Let us forth, my Nina. Am I well cloaked ?

"Excellently well—and I ?"

"The sun behind a cloud."

"Ah, let us not tarry long ; what hour of revel like that when thy hand in mine, this head upon thy bosom, we forget the sorrows we have known, and even the triumphs we have shared ?"

Meanwhile, Irene, confused and lost amidst a transport of emotion, already disguised and masked, was threading her way through the crowd back to the staircase of the Lion. With the absence of the Senator that spot had comparatively been deserted. Music and the dance attracted the maskers to another quarter of the wide space. And Irene now approaching, beheld the moonlight fall over the statue, and a solitary figure leaning against the pedestal. She paused, the figure approached, and again she heard the voice of her early love.

"Oh, Irene ! recognised even in this disguise," said Adrian, seizing her trembling hand ; "have I lived to gaze again upon that form—to touch this hand ? Did not these eyes behold thee lifeless in that fearful vault, which I shudder to recall ? By what miracle wert thou raised again ? By what means did Heaven spare to this earth one that it seemed already to have placed amongst its angels ?"

"Was this indeed thy belief ?" said Irene, falteringly, but with an accent eloquent of joy. "Thou didst not then willingly desert me ? Unjust that I was, I wronged thy noble nature, and deemed that my brother's fall, my humble lineage, thy brilliant fate, had made thee renounce Irene."

"Unjust indeed !" answered the lover. "But surely I saw thee amongst the dead !—thy cloak, with the silver stars—who else wore the arms of the Roman Tribune ?"

"Was it but the cloak then, which, dropped in the streets, was probably assumed by some more ill-fated victim was it *that* sight alone that made thee so soon despair ? Ah !

Adrian," continued Irene, tenderly, but with reproach; "not even when I saw *thee* seemingly lifeless on the couch by which I had watched three days and nights, not even then did *I* despair!"

"What, then, my vision did not deceive me! It was you who watched by my bed in that grim hour, whose love guarded, whose care preserved me! And I, wretch that I was!——"

"Nay," answered Irene, "your thought was natural. Heaven seemed to endow me with superhuman strength, whilst I was necessary to thee. But judge of my dismay. I left thee to seek the good friar who attended thee as thy leech; I returned, and found thee not. Heart-sick and terrified, I searched the desolate city in vain. Strong as I was while hope supported me, I sank beneath fear. And my brother found me senseless, and stretched on the ground, by the church of St. Mark."

"The church of St. Mark!—so foretold his dream!"

"He had told me he had met thee; we searched for thee in vain; at length we heard that thou hadst left the city, and—and—I rejoiced, Adrian, but I repined!"

For some minutes the young lovers surrendered themselves to the delight of re-union, while new explanations called forth new transports.

"And now," murmured Irene, "now that we have met——" she paused, and her mask concealed her blushes.

"Now that we have met," said Adrian, filling up the silence, "wouldst thou say further, 'that we should not part?' Trust me, dearest, that is the hope that animates my heart. It was but to enjoy these brief bright moments with thee, that I delayed my departure to Palestrina. Could I but hope to bring my young cousin into amity with thy brother, no barrier would prevent our union. Willingly I forget the past—the death of my unhappy kinsmen (victims, it is true, to their own faults); and, perhaps, amidst all the crowds that hailed his return, none more appreciated the great and lofty qualities of Cola di Rienzi, than did Adrian Colonna."

"If this be so," said Irene, "let me hope the best; meanwhile, it is enough of comfort and of happiness to know, that we love

each other as of old. Ah, Adrian, I am sadly changed ; and often have I thought it a thing beyond my dreams, that thou shouldst see me again and love me still."

"Fairer art thou and lovelier than ever," answered Adrian, passionately ; "and time, which has ripened thy bloom, has but taught me more deeply to feel thy value. Farewell, Irene, I linger here no longer ; thou wilt, I trust, hear soon of my success with my House, and ere the week be over I may return to claim thy hand in the face of day."

The lovers parted ; Adrian lingered on the spot, and Irene hastened to bury her emotion and her raptures in her own chamber.

As her form vanished, and the young Colonna slowly turned away, a tall mask strode abruptly towards him.

"Thou art a Colonna," it said, "and in the power of the Senator. Dost thou tremble?"

"If I be a Colonna, rude masker," answered Adrian, coldly, "thou shouldst know the old proverb, 'He who stirs the column, shall rue the fall.'"

The stranger laughed aloud, and then lifting his mask, Adrian saw that it was the Senator who stood before him.

"My Lord Adrian di Castello," said Rienzi, resuming all his gravity, "is it as friend or foe that you have honoured our revels this night?"

"Senator of Rome," answered Adrian, with equal stateliness, "I partake of no man's hospitality but as a friend. A foe, at least to you, I trust never justly to be esteemed."

"I would," rejoined Rienzi, "that I could apply to myself unreservedly that most flattering speech. Are these friendly feelings entertained towards me as the Governor of the Roman people, or as the brother of the woman who has listened to your vows?"

Adrian, who when the Senator had unmasked had followed his example, felt at these words that his eye quailed beneath Rienzi's. However, he recovered himself with the wonted readiness of an Italian, and replied laconically,

"As both."

"Both!" echoed Rienzi. "Then, indeed, noble Adrian, you

are welcome hither. And yet, methinks, if you conceived there was no cause for enmity between us, you would have wooed the sister of Cola di Rienzi in a guise more worthy of your birth; and, permit me to add, of that station which God, destiny, and my country have accorded unto *me*. You dare not, young Colonna, meditate dishonour to the sister of the Senator of Rome. High-born as you are, she is your equal."

"Were I the Emperor, whose simple knight I but am, your sister were my equal," answered Adrian, warmly. "Rienzi, I grieve that I am discovered to you yet. I had trusted that, as a mediator between the Barons and yourself, I might first have won your confidence, and then claimed my reward. Know that with to-morrow's dawn I depart for Palestrina, seeking to reconcile my young cousin to the choice of the People and the Pontiff. Various reasons, which I need not now detail, would have made me wish to undertake this heraldry of peace without previous communication with you. But since we *have* met, intrust me with any terms of conciliation, and I pledge you the right hand, not of a Roman noble—alas! the *prisca fides* has departed from that pledge!—but of a Knight of the Imperial Court, that I will not betray your confidence."

Rienzi, accustomed to read the human countenance, had kept his eyes intently fixed upon Adrian while he spoke; when the Colonna concluded, he pressed the proffered hand, and said, with that familiar and winning sweetness which at times was so peculiar to his manner,

"I trust you, Adrian, from my soul. You were mine early friend in calmer, perchance happier years. And never did river reflect the stars more clearly than your heart then mirrored back the truth. I trust you!"

While thus speaking, he had mechanically led back the Colonna to the statue of the Lion; there pausing, he resumed:

"Know that I have this morning dispatched my delegate to your cousin Stefanello. With all due courtesy, I have apprised him of my return to Rome, and invited hither his honoured presence. Forgetting all ancient feuds, mine own past exile, I have assured him, here, the station and dignity due to the head of the Colonna. All that I ask in return is obedience to the law.

Years and reverses have abated my younger pride, and though I may yet preserve the sternness of the Judge, none shall hereafter complain of the insolence of the Tribune."

"I would," answered Adrian, "that your mission to Stefanello had been delayed a day; I would fain have forestalled its purport. Howbeit, you increase my desire of departure. Should I yet succeed in obtaining an honourable and peaceful reconciliation, it is not in disguise that I will woo your sister."

"And never did Colonna," replied Rienzi, loftily, "bring to his House a maiden whose alliance more gratified ambition. I still see, as I have seen ever, in mine own projects, and mine own destinies, the chart of the new Roman Empire!"

"Be not too sanguine yet, brave Rienzi," replied Adrian, laying his hand on the Lion of Basalt: "bethink thee on how many scheming brains this dumb image of stone hath looked down from its pedestal—schemes of sand, and schemers of dust. Thou hast enough, at present, for the employ of all thine energy—not to extend thy power, but to preserve thyself. For, trust me, never stood human greatness on so wild and dark a precipice!"

"Thou art honest," said the Senator; "and these are the first words of doubt, and yet of sympathy, I have heard in Rome. But the People love me, the Barons have fled from Rome, the Pontiff approves, and the swords of the Northmen guard the avenues of the Capitol. But these are nought; in mine own honesty are my spear and buckler. "Oh, never," continued Rienzi, kindling with enthusiasm, "never since the days of the old Republic, did Roman dream a purer and a brighter aspiration than that which animates and supports me now. Peace restored—law established—art, letters, intellect, dawning upon the night of time; the Patricians, no longer bandits of rapine, but the guards of order; the People ennobled from a mob, brave to protect, enlightened to guide, themselves. Then, not by the violence of arms, but by the majesty of her moral power, shall the Mother of Nations claim the obedience of her children. Thus dreaming and thus hoping, shall I tremble or despond? No, Adrian Colonna; come weal or woe, I abide, unshrinking and unawed, by the chances of my doom!"

So much did the manner and the tone of the Senator exalt his language, that even the sober sense of Adrian was enchanted and subdued. He kissed the hand he held, and said earnestly,

"A doom that I will deem it my boast to share—a career that it will be my glory to smooth. If I succeed in my present mission——"

"You are my brother!" said Rienzi.

"If I fail?"

"You may equally claim that alliance. You pause—you change colour."

"Can I desert my house?"

"Young Lord," said Rienzi, loftily, "say rather can you desert your country. If you doubt my honesty, if you fear my ambition, desist from your task, rob me not of a single foe. But if you believe that I have the will and the power to serve the state—if you recognise, even in the reverses and calamities I have known and mastered, the protecting hand of the Saviour of nations—if those reverses were but the mercies of Him who chasteneth—necessary, it may be, to correct my earlier daring and sharpen yet more my intellect—if, in a word, thou believest me one whom, whatever be his faults, God hath preserved for the sake of Rome, forget that you are a Colonna—remember only that you are a Roman!"

"You have conquered me, strange and commanding spirit," said Adrian, in a low voice, completely carried away; "and whatever the conduct of my kindred, I am yours and Rome's. Farewell."

CHAPTER III.

ADRIAN'S ADVENTURES AT PALESTRINA.

IT was yet noon when Adrian beheld before him the lofty mountains that shelter Palestrina, the *Præneste* of the ancient world. Back to a period before Romulus existed, in the earliest ages of that mysterious civilization which in Italy preceded the

birth of Rome, could be traced the existence and the power of that rocky city. Eight dependent towns owned its sway and its wealth; its position, and the strength of those mighty walls, in whose ruins may yet be traced the masonry of the remote Pelasgi, had long braved the ambition of the neighbouring Rome. From that very citadel, the Mural Crown¹ of the mountain, had waved the standard of Marius; and up the road which Adrian's scanty troop slowly wound, had echoed the march of the murderous Sylla, on his return from the Mithridatic war. Below, where the city spreads towards the plain, were yet seen the shattered and roofless columns of the once celebrated Temple of Fortune; and still the immemorial olives clustered grey and mournfully around the ruins.

A more formidable hold the Barons of Rome could not have selected; and as Adrian's military eye scanned the steep ascent and the rugged walls, he felt that with ordinary skill it might defy for months all the power of the Roman Senator. Below, in the fertile valley, dismantled cottages and trampled harvests attested the violence and rapine of the insurgent Barons; and at that very moment were seen, in the old plain of the warlike Hernici, troops of armed men, driving before them herds of sheep and cattle, collected in their lawless incursions. In sight of that *Præneste*, which had been the favourite retreat of the luxurious Lords of Rome in its most polished day, the Age of Iron seemed renewed.

The banner of the Colonna, borne by Adrian's troop, obtained ready admittance at the Porta del Sole. As he passed up the irregular and narrow streets that ascended to the citadel, groups of foreign mercenaries,—half-ragged, half-tawdry knots of abandoned women,—mixed here and there with the liveries of the Colonna, stood loitering amidst the ruins of ancient fanes and palaces, or basked lazily in the sun, upon terraces, through which, from amidst weeds and grass, glowed the imperishable hues of the rich mosaics, which had made the pride of that lettered and graceful nobility, of whom savage freebooters were now the heirs.

¹ Hence, apparently, its Greek name of *Stephane*. *Palestrina* is yet one of the many proofs which the vicinity of Rome affords of the old Greek civilization of Italy.

The contrast between the Past and Present forcibly occurred to Adrian, as he passed along ; and, despite his order, he felt as if Civilization itself were enlisted against his House upon the side of Rienzi.

Leaving his train in the court of the citadel, Adrian demanded admission to the presence of his cousin. He had left Stefanello a child on his departure from Rome, and there could therefore be but a slight and unfamiliar acquaintance betwixt them, despite their kindred.

Peals of laughter came upon his ear, as he followed one of Stefanello's gentlemen through a winding passage that led to the principal chamber. The door was thrown open, and Adrian found himself in a rude hall, to which some appearance of hasty state and attempted comfort had been given. Costly arras imperfectly clothed the stone walls, and the rich seats and decorated tables, which the growing civilization of the northern cities of Italy had already introduced into the palaces of Italian nobles, strangely contrasted the rough pavement, spread with heaps of armour negligently piled around. At the farther end of the apartment, Adrian shudderingly perceived, set in due and exact order, the implements of torture.

Stefanello Colonna, with two other Barons, indolently reclined on seats drawn around a table, in the recess of a deep casement, from which might be still seen the same glorious landscape, bounded by the dim spires of Rome, which Hannibal and Pyrrhus had ascended that very citadel to survey !

Stefanello himself, in the first bloom of youth, bore already on his beardless countenance those traces usually the work of the passions and vices of maturest manhood. His features were cast in the mould of the old Stephen's ; in their clear, sharp, high-bred outline might be noticed that regular and graceful symmetry, which blood, in men as in animals, will sometimes entail through generations ; but the features were wasted and meagre. His brows were knit in an eternal frown ; his thin and bloodless lips wore that insolent contempt which seems so peculiarly cold and unlovely in early youth ; and the deep and livid hollows round his eyes, spoke of habitual excess and premature exhaustion. By him sat (reconciled by hatred

to one another) the hereditary foes of his race; the soft, but cunning and astute features of Luca di Savelli, contrasted with the broad frame and ferocious countenance of the Prince of the Orsini.

The young head of the Colonna rose with some cordiality to receive his cousin. "Welcome," he said, "dear Adrian; you are arrived in time to assist us with your well-known military skill. Think you not we shall stand a long siege, if the insolent plebeian dare adventure it? You know our friends, the Orsini and the Savelli? Thanks to St. Peter, or Peter's delegate, we have now happily meaner throats to cut than those of each other!"

Thus saying, Stefanello again threw himself listlessly on his seat, and the shrill, woman's voice of Savelli took part in the dialogue.

"I would, noble Signor, that you had come a few hours earlier: we are still making merry at the recollection—he, he, he!"

"Ah, excellent," cried Stefanello, joining in the laugh; "our cousin has had a loss. Know Adrian, that this base fellow, whom the Pope has had the impudence to create Senator, dared but yesterday to send us a varlet, whom he called—by our Lady!—his *ambassador*!"

"Would you could have seen his mantle, Signor Adrian!" chimed in the Savelli: "purple velvet, as I live, decorated in gold, with the arms of Rome: we soon spoiled his finery."

"What!" exclaimed Adrian, "you did not break the laws of all nobility and knighthood?—you offered no insult to a herald?"

"Herald, sayest thou?" cried Stefanello, frowning till his eyes were scarce visible. "It is for Princes and Barons alone to employ heralds. An I had had my will, I would have sent back the minion's head to the usurper."

"What did ye then?" asked Adrian, coldly.

"Bade our swineherds dip the fellow in the ditch, and gave him a night's lodging in a dungeon to dry himself withal."

"And this morning—he, he, he!" added the Savelli, "we had him before us, and drew his teeth, one by one;—I would you could have heard the fellow mumble out for mercy!"

Adrian rose hastily, and struck the table fiercely with his gauntlet.

"Stefanello Colonna," said he, colouring with noble rage, "answer me: did you dare to inflict this indelible disgrace upon the name we jointly bear? Tell me, at least, that you protested against this foul treason to all the laws of civilization and of honour. You answer not. House of the Colonna, can such be thy representative!"

"To me these words!" said Stefanello, trembling with passion. "Beware! Methinks *thou* art the traitor, leagued perhaps with yon rascal mob. Well do I remember that thou, the betrothed of the Demagogue's sister, didst not join **with** my uncle and my father of old, but didst basely leave the city to her plebeian tyrant."

"That did he!" said the fierce Orsini, approaching Adrian menacingly, while the gentle cowardice of Savelli sought in vain to pluck him back by the mantle—"that did he! and but for thy presence, Stefanello——"

"Coward and blusterer!" interrupted Adrian, fairly beside himself with indignation and shame, and dashing his gauntlet in the very face of the advancing Orsini—"wouldst thou threaten one who has maintained, in every list of Europe, and against the stoutest Chivalry of the North, the honour of Rome, which thy deeds the while disgraced? By this gage, I spit upon and defy thee. With lance and with brand, on horse and on foot, I maintain against thee and all thy line, that thou art no knight to have thus maltreated, in thy strongholds, a peaceful and unarmed herald. Yes, even here, on the spot of thy disgrace, I challenge thee to arms!"

"To the court below! Follow me," said Orsini, sullenly, and striding towards the threshold. "What, ho there! my helmet and breast-plate!"

"Stay, noble Orsini," said Stefanello. "The insult offered to thee is my quarrel—mine was the deed—and against me speaks this degenerate scion of our line. Adrian di Castello—sometime called Colonna—surrender your sword: you are my prisoner!"

"Oh!" said Adrian, grinding his teeth, "that my ancestral

blood did not flow through thy veins—else—but enough! Me! your equal, and the favoured Knight of the Emperor, whose advent now brightens the frontiers of Italy!—me—you dare not detain. For your friends, I shall meet them yet perhaps, ere many days are over, where none shall separate our swords. Till then, remember, Orsini, that it is against no unpractised arm that thou wilt have to redeem thine honour!”

Adrian, his drawn sword in his hand, strode towards the door, and passed the Orsini, who stood, lowering and irresolute, in the centre of the apartment.

Savelli whispered Stefanello. “He says, ‘Ere many days be past!’ Be sure, dear Signor, that he goes to join Rienzi. Remember, the alliance he once sought with the Tribune’s sister may be renewed. Beware of him! Ought he to leave the castle? The name of a Colonna, associated with the mob, would distract and divide half our strength.”

“Fear me not,” returned Stefanello, with a malignant smile. “Ere you spoke, I had determined!”

The young Colonna lifted the arras from the wall, opened a door, and passed into a low hall, in which sate twenty mercenaries.

“Quick!” said he. “Seize and disarm yon stranger in the green mantle—but slay him not. Bid the guard below find dungeons for his train. Quick! ere he reach the gate.”

Adrian had gained the open hall below—his train and his steed were in sight in the court—when suddenly the soldiery of the Colonna, rushing through another passage than that which he had passed, surrounded and intercepted his retreat.

“Yield thee, Adrian di Castello,” cried Stefanello from the summit of the stairs; “or your blood be on your own head.”

Three steps did Adrian make through the press, and three of his enemies fell beneath his sword. “To the rescue!” he shouted to his band, and already those bold and daring troopers had gained the hall. Presently the alarum bell tolled loud—the court swarmed with soldiers. Oppressed by numbers, beat down rather than subdued, Adrian’s little train was soon secured, and the flower of the Colonna, wounded, breathless, disarmed, but still uttering loud defiance, was a prisoner in the fortress of his kinsman.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POSITION OF THE SENATOR.—THE WORK OF YEARS.—THE REWARDS OF AMBITION.

THE indignation of Rienzi may readily be conceived, on the return of his herald mutilated and dishonoured. His temper, so naturally stern, was rendered yet more hard by the remembrance of his wrongs and trials; and the result which attended his overtures of conciliation to Stefanello Colonna stung him to the soul.

The bell of the Capitol tolled to arms within ten minutes after the return of the herald. The great gonfalon of Rome was unfurled on the highest tower; and the very evening after Adrian's arrest, the forces of the Senator, headed by Rienzi in person, were on the road to Palestrina. The troopers of the Barons had, however, made incursions as far as Tivoli with the supposed connivance of the inhabitants, and Rienzi halted at that beautiful spot to raise recruits, and receive the allegiance of the suspected, while his soldiers, with Arimbaldo and Brettone at their head, went in search of the marauders. The brothers of Montreal returned late at night with the intelligence that the troopers of the Barons had secured themselves amidst the recesses of the wood of Pantano.

The red spot mounted to Rienzi's brow. He gazed hard at Brettone, who stated the news to him, and a natural suspicion shot across his mind.

"How!—escaped!" he said. "Is it possible? Enough of such idle skirmishes with these lordly robbers. Will the hour ever come when I shall meet them hand to hand? Brettone," and the brother of Montreal felt the dark eye of Rienzi pierce to his very heart: "Brettone!" said he, with an abrupt change of voice, "are your men to be *trusted*? Is there no connivance with the Barons?"

"How!" said Brettone, sullenly, but somewhat confused.

"How me no hows!" quoth the Tribune-Senator, fiercely. "I

know that thou art a valiant Captain of valiant men. Thou and thy brother Arimbaldo have served me well, and I have rewarded ye well! Have I not? Speak!"

"Senator," answered Arimbaldo, taking up the word, "you have kept your word to us. You have raised us to the highest rank your power could bestow, and this has amply atoned our humble services."

"I am glad ye allow thus much," said the Tribune.

Arimbaldo proceeded, somewhat more loftily, "I trust, my lord, you do not doubt us?"

"Arimbaldo," replied Rienzi, in a voice of deep, but half-suppressed emotion; "you are a lettered man, and you have seemed to share my projects for the regeneration of our common kind. *You* ought not to betray me. There is something in unison between *us*. But, chide me not, I am surrounded by treason, and the very air I breathe seems poison to my lips."

There was a pathos mingled with Rienzi's words which touched the milder brother of Montreal. He bowed in silence. Rienzi surveyed him wistfully, and sighed. Then, changing the conversation, he spoke of their intended siege of Palestrina, and shortly afterwards retired to rest.

Left alone, the brothers regarded each other for some moments in silence. "Brettone," said Arimbaldo, at length, in a whispered voice, "my heart misgives me. I like not Walter's ambitious schemes. With our own countrymen we are frank and loyal, why play the traitor with this high-souled Roman?"¹

"Tush!" said Brettone. "Our brother's hand of iron alone can sway this turbulent people; and if Rienzi be betrayed, so also are his enemies, the Barons. No more of this! I have tidings from Montreal; he will be in Rome in a few days."

"And then?"

"Rienzi, weakened by the Barons (for he must not conquer)—the Barons, weakened by Rienzi—our Northmen seize the

¹ The anonymous biographer of Rienzi makes the following just remark: "Sono li tedeschi, come discendon de la Alemagna, semplici, puri, senza fraude, come si allocano tra' taliani, diventano mastri coduti, viziosi, che sentono ogni malizia."—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. c. 16.

Capitol, and the soldiery, now scattered throughout Italy, will fly to the standard of the Great Captain. Montreal must be first Podesta, then King, of Rome."

Arimbaldo moved restlessly in his seat, and the brethren conferred no more on their projects.

The situation of Rienzi was precisely that which tends the most to sour and to harden the fairest nature. With an intellect capable of the grandest designs, a heart that beat with the loftiest emotions, elevated to the sunny pinnacle of power and surrounded by loud-tongued adulators, he knew not among men a single breast in which he could confide. He was as one on a steep ascent, whose footing crumbles, while every bough at which he grasps seems to rot at his touch. He found the people more than ever eloquent in his favour, but while they shouted raptures as he passed, not a man was capable of *making a sacrifice for him!* The liberty of a state is never achieved by a single individual; if not the people—if not the greater number—a zealous and fervent minority, at least, must go hand in hand with him. Rome demanded sacrifices in all who sought the Roman regeneration—sacrifices of time, ease, and money. The crowd followed the procession of the Senator, but not a single Roman devoted his life, *unpaid*, to his standard; not a single coin was subscribed in the defence of freedom. Against him were arrayed the most powerful and the most ferocious Barons of Italy; each of whom could maintain, at his own cost, a little army of practised warriors. With Rienzi were traders and artificers, who were willing to enjoy the fruits of liberty, but not to labour at the soil; who demanded, in return for empty shouts, peace and riches; and who expected that one man was to effect in a day what would be cheaply purchased by the struggle of a generation. All their dark and rude notion of a reformed state was to live unbutchered by the Barons and untaxed by their governors. Rome, I say, gave to her Senator not a free arm, nor a voluntary florin.¹ Well aware of the danger which surrounds the ruler who defends his state by foreign swords, the fondest wish, and the most visionary dream of Rienzi, was to revive amongst the Romans, in their first enthu-

¹ This plain fact is thoroughly borne out by every authority.

siasm at his return, an organized and voluntary force, who, in protecting him, would protect themselves:—not, as before, in his first power, a *nominal* force of twenty thousand men, who at any hour might yield (as they did yield) to one hundred and fifty; but a regular, well disciplined, and trusty body, numerous enough to resist aggression, not numerous enough to become themselves the aggressors.

Hitherto all his private endeavours, his public exhortations, had failed; the crowd listened—shouted—saw him quit the city to meet their tyrants, and returned to their shops saying to each other, “What a great man!”

The character of Rienzi has chiefly received for its judges men of the closet, who speculate upon human beings as if they were machines; who gauge the great, not by their merit, but their success; and who have censured or sneered at the Tribune, where they should have condemned the People! Had but one-half the spirit been found in Rome which ran through a single vein of Cola di Rienzi, the august Republic, if not the majestic empire, of Rome, might be existing now! Turning from the people, the Senator saw his rude and savage troops, accustomed to the licence of a tyrant’s camp, and under commanders in whom it was ruin really to confide—whom it was equal ruin openly to distrust. Hemmed in on every side by dangers, his character daily grew more restless, vigilant, and stern; and still, with all the aims of the patriot, he felt all the curses of the tyrant. Without the rough and hardening career which, through a life of warfare, had brought Cromwell to a similar power—with more of grace and intellectual softness in his composition, he resembled that yet greater man in some points of character—in his religious enthusiasm; his rigid justice, often forced by circumstance into severity, but never wantonly cruel or bloodthirsty; in his singular pride of country; and his mysterious command over the minds of others. But he resembled the giant Englishman far more in circumstance than original nature, and that circumstance assimilated their characters at the close of their several careers. Like Cromwell, beset by secret or open foes, the assassin’s dagger ever gleamed before his eyes; and his stout heart, unawed by real, trembled at imagined, terrors. The

countenance changing suddenly from red to white—the blood-shot, restless eye, belying the composed majesty of mien—the muttering lips—the broken slumber—the secret corselet ;—these to both were the rewards of Power !

The elasticity of youth had left the Tribune ! His frame, which had endured so many shocks, had contracted a painful disease in the dungeon at Avignon¹—his high soul still supported him, but the nerves gave way. Tears came readily into his eyes, and often, like Cromwell, he was thought to weep from hypocrisy, when in truth it was the hysteric of overwrought and irritable emotion. In all his former life singularly temperate,² he now fled from his goading thoughts to the beguiling excitement of wine. He drank deep, though its effects were never visible upon him except in a freer and wilder mood, and the indulgence of that racy humour, half-mirthful, half-bitter, for which his younger days had been distinguished. Now the mirth had more loudness, but the bitterness more gall.

Such were the characteristics of Rienzi at his return to power—made more apparent with every day. Nina he still loved with the same tenderness, and, if possible, she adored him more than ever : but, the zest and freshness of triumphant ambition gone, somehow or other, their intercourse together had not its old charm. Formerly they talked constantly of the *future*—of the bright days in store for them. Now, with a sharp and uneasy pang, Rienzi turned from all thought of that “gay to-morrow.” There was no “gay to-morrow” for him ! Dark and thorny as was the present hour, all beyond seemed yet less cheering and more ominous. Still he had some moments, brief but brilliant, when, forgetting the iron race amongst whom he was thrown, he plunged into scholastic reveries of the worshipped Past, and half fancied that he was of a People worthy of his genius and his devotion. Like most men who have been preserved through great dangers, he continued with increasing fondness to nourish a credulous belief

¹ “Dicea che ne la prigione era stato ascarmato.”—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 18.

² “Solea prima esser sobrio, temperato, astinente, ora è diventato distemperatissimo bevitore,” &c.—*Ibid.*

“At first he used to be sober, temperate, abstinent ; now he is become a most intemperate drinker,” &c.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

in the grandeur of his own destiny. He could not imagine that he had been so delivered, and for no end! He was the Elected, and therefore the Instrument of Heaven. And thus, that Bible which in his loneliness, his wanderings, and his prison, had been his solace and support, was more than ever needed in his greatness.

It was another cause of sorrow and chagrin to one who, amidst such circumstances of public danger, required so peculiarly the support and sympathy of private friends,—that he found he had incurred amongst his old coadjutors the common penalty of absence. A few were dead; others, wearied with the storms of public life, and chilled in their ardour by the turbulent revolutions to which, in every effort for her amelioration, Rome has been subjected, had retired,—some altogether from the city, some from all participation in political affairs. In his halls, the Tribune-Senator was surrounded by unfamiliar faces, and a new generation. Of the heads of the popular party, most were animated by a stern dislike to the Pontifical domination, and looked with suspicion and repugnance upon one who, if he governed for the people, had been trusted and honoured by the Pope. Rienzi was not a man to forget former friends, however lowly, and had already found time to seek an interview with Cecco del Vecchio. But that stern Republican had received him with coldness. His foreign mercenaries, and his title of Senator, were things that the artisan could not digest. With his usual bluntness, he had said so to Rienzi.

“As for the last,” answered the Tribune, affably, “names do not alter natures. When I forget that to be delegate to the Pontiff is to be the guardian of his flock, forsake me. As for the first, let me but see five hundred Romans sworn to stand armed day and night for the defence of Rome, and I dismiss the Northmen.”

Cecco del Vecchio was unsoftened; honest, but uneducated—impracticable, and by nature a malcontent, he felt as if he were no longer necessary to the Senator, and this offended his pride. Strange as it may seem, the sullen artisan bore, too, a secret grudge against Rienzi, for not having seen and selected him from a crowd of thousands on the day of his triumphal

entry. Such are the small offences which produce deep danger to the great !

The artisans still held their meetings, and Cecco del Vecchio's voice was heard loud in grumbling forebodings. But what wounded Rienzi yet more than the alienation of the rest, was the confused and altered manner of his old friend and familiar, Pandulfo di Guido. Missing that popular citizen among those who daily offered their homage at the Capitol, he had sent for him, and sought in vain to revive their ancient intimacy. Pandulfo affected great respect, but not all the condescension of the Senator could conquer his distance and his restraint. In fact, Pandulfo had learned to form ambitious projects of his own ; and but for the return of Rienzi, Pandulfo di Guido felt that he might now, with greater safety, and indeed with some connivance from the Barons, have been the Tribune of the People. The facility to rise into popular eminence which a disordered and corrupt state, unblest by a regular constitution, offers to ambition, breeds the jealousy and the rivalry which destroy union, and rot away the ties of party.

Such was the situation of Rienzi, and yet, wonderful to say, he seemed to be adored by the multitude ; and law and liberty, life and death, were in his hands !

Of all those who attended his person, Angelo Villani was the most favoured ; that youth who had accompanied Rienzi in his long exile, had also, at the wish of Nina, attended him from Avignon, through his sojourn in the camp of Alborno. His zeal, intelligence, and frank and evident affection, blinded the Senator to the faults of his character, and established him more and more in the gratitude of Rienzi. He loved to feel that one faithful heart beat near him, and the page, raised to the rank of his chamberlain, always attended his person, and slept in his ante-chamber.

Retiring that night at Tivoli, to the apartment prepared for him, the Senator sat down by the open casement, through which were seen, waving in the starlight, the dark pines that crowned the hills, while the stillness of the hour gave to his ear the dash of the waterfalls heard above the regular and measured tread of the sentinels below. Leaning his cheek upon his hand, Rienzi

long surrendered himself to gloomy thought, and, when he looked up, he saw the bright blue eye of Villani fixed in anxious sympathy on his countenance.

"Is my lord unwell?" asked the young chamberlain, hesitating.

"Not so, my Angelo; but somewhat sick at heart. Methinks, for a September night, the air is chill! Angelo," resumed Rienzi, who had already acquired that uneasy curiosity which belongs to an uncertain power,—“Angelo, bring me hither yon writing implements; hast thou heard aught what the men say of our probable success against Palestrina?”

"Would my lord wish to learn all their gossip, whether it please or not?" answered Villani.

"If I studied only to hear what pleased me, Angelo, I should never have returned to Rome."

"Why, then, I heard a constable of the Northmen say, meaningly, that the place will not be carried."

"Humph! And what said the captains of my Roman Legion!"

"My lord, I have heard it whispered that they fear defeat less than they do the revenge of the Barons, if they are successful."

"And with such tools the living race of Europe and misjudging posterity will deem that the workman is to shape out the Ideal and the Perfect! Bring me yon Bible."

As Angelo reverently brought to Rienzi the sacred book, he said,

"Just before I left my companions below, there was a rumour that the Lord Adrian Colonna had been imprisoned by his kinsman."

"I too heard, and I believe, as much," returned Rienzi: "these Barons would gibbet their own children in irons, if there were any chance of the shackles growing rusty for want of prey. But the wicked shall be brought low, and their strong places shall be made desolate."

"I would, my lord," said Villani, "that our Northmen had other captains than these Provençals."

"Why?" asked Rienzi, abruptly.

“Have the creatures of the Captain of the Grand Company ever held faith with any man whom it suited the avarice or the ambition of Montreal to betray? Was he not, a few months ago, the right arm of John di Vico, and did he not sell his services to John di Vico’s enemy, the Cardinal Albornoz? These warriors barter men as cattle.”

“Thou describest Montreal rightly: a dangerous and an awful man. But methinks his brothers are of a duller and meaner kind; they dare not the crimes of the Robber Captain. Howbeit, Angelo, thou hast touched a string that will make discord with sleep to-night. Fair youth, thy young eyes have need of slumber; withdraw, and when thou hearest men envy Rienzi, think that——”

“God never made Genius to be envied!” interrupted Villani, with an energy that overcame his respect. “We envy not the sun, but rather the valleys that ripen beneath his beams.”

“Verily, if I be the sun,” said Rienzi, with a bitter and melancholy smile, “I long for night,—and come it will, to the human as to the celestial pilgrim!—Thank Heaven at least, that our ambition cannot make us immortal!”

CHAPTER V.

THE BITER BIT.

THE next morning, when Rienzi descended to the room where his captains awaited him, his quick eye perceived that a cloud still lowered upon the brow of Messere Brettone. Arimbaldo, sheltered by the recess of the rude casement, shunned his eye.

“A fair morning, gentles,” said Rienzi; “the sun laughs upon our enterprise. I have messengers from Rome betimes—fresh troops will join us ere noon.”

“I am glad, Senator,” answered Brettone, “that you have tidings which will counteract the ill of those I have to narrate to thee. The soldiers murmur loudly—their pay is due to them; and, I fear me, that without money they will not march to Palestrina.”

"As they will," returned Rienzi, carelessly. "It is but a few days since they entered Rome ; pay did they receive in advance—if they demand more, the Colonna and Orsini may outbid me. Draw off your soldiers, Sir Knight, and farewell."

Brettone's countenance fell—it was his object to get Rienzi more and more in his power, and he wished not to suffer him to gain that strength which would accrue to him from the fall of Palestrina : the indifference of the Senator foiled and entrapped him in his own net.

"That must not be," said the brother of Montreal, after a confused silence ; "we cannot leave you thus to your enemies—the soldiers, it is true, demand pay——"

"And should have it," said Rienzi. "I know these mercenaries—it is ever with them, mutiny or money. I will throw myself on my Romans, and triumph—or fall, if so Heaven decrees, with them. Acquaint your constables with my resolve."

Scarce were those words spoken, ere, as previously concerted with Brettone, the chief constable of the mercenaries appeared at the door. "Senator," said he, with a rough semblance of aspect, "your orders to march have reached me, I have sought to marshal my men—but——"

"I know what thou wouldst say, friend," interrupted Rienzi, waving his hand : "Messere Brettone will give you my reply. Another time, Sir Captain, more ceremony with the Senator of Rome—you may withdraw."

The unforeseen dignity of Rienzi rebuked and abashed the constable ; he looked at Brettone, who motioned him to depart. He closed the door and withdrew.

"What is to be done ?" said Brettone.

"Sir Knight," replied Rienzi, gravely, "let us understand each other. Would you serve me or not ? If the first, you are not my equal, but subordinate—and you must obey and not dictate ; if the last, my debt to you shall be discharged, and the world is wide enough for both."

"We have declared allegiance to you," answered Brettone, "and it shall be given."

"One caution before I re-accept your fealty," replied Rienzi, very slowly. "For an open foe, I have my sword—for a traitor,

mark me, Rome has the axe; of the first, I have no fear; for the last, no mercy."

"These are not words that should pass between friends," said Brettone, turning pale with suppressed emotion.

"Friends!—ye are my friends, then!—your hands! Friends, so ye are!—and shall prove it! Dear Arimbaldo, thou, like myself, art book-learned,—a clerkly soldier. Dost thou remember how in the Roman history it is told that the Treasury lacked money for the soldiers? The Consul convened the nobles. 'Ye,' said he, 'that have the offices and dignity should be the first to pay for them.' Ye heed me, my friends; the nobles took the hint, they found the money—the army was paid. This example is not lost on you. I have made you the leaders of my force, Rome hath showered her honours on you. Your generosity shall commence the example which the Romans shall thus learn of strangers. Ye gaze at me, *my friends!* I read your noble souls—and thank ye beforehand. Ye have the dignity and the office; ye have also the wealth!—pay the hirelings, pay them!"¹

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Brettone, he could not have been more astounded than at this simple suggestion of Rienzi's. He lifted his eyes to the Senator's face, and saw there that smile which he had already, bold as he was, learned to dread. He felt himself fairly sunk in the pit he had digged for another. There was that in the Senator-Tribune's brow that told him to refuse was to declare open war, and the moment was not ripe for that.

"Ye accede," said Rienzi; "ye have done well."

The Senator clapped his hands—his guard appeared.

"Summon the head constables of the soldiery."

The brothers still remained dumb.

The constables entered.

"My friends," said Rienzi, "Messere Brettone and Messere Arimbaldo have my directions to divide amongst your force a thousand florins. This evening we encamp beneath Palestrina."

The constables withdrew in visible surprise. Rienzi gazed a moment on the brothers, chuckling within himself—for his

¹ See the *Anonymous Biographer*, lib. ii. cap. 19.

sarcastic humour enjoyed his triumph. "You lament not your devotion, *my friends*?"

"No," said Brettone, rousing himself; "the sum but trivially swells our debt."

"Frankly said—your hands once more!—the good people of Tivoli expect me in the Piazza—they require some admonitions. Adieu till noon."

When the door closed on Rienzi, Brettone struck the handle of his sword fiercely—"The Roman laughs at us," said he. "But let Walter de Montreal once appear in Rome, and the proud jester shall pay us dearly for this."

"Hush!" said Arimbaldo, "walls have ears, and that imp of Satan, young Villani, seems to me ever at our heels!"

"A thousand florins! I trust his heart hath as many drops," growled the chafed Brettone, unheeding his brother.

The soldiers were paid—the army marched—the eloquence of the Senator had augmented his force by volunteers from Tivoli, and wild and half-armed peasantry joined his standard from the Campagna and the neighbouring mountains.

Palestrina was besieged; Rienzi continued dexterously to watch the brothers of Montreal. Under pretext of imparting to the Italian volunteers the advantage of their military science, he separated them from their mercenaries, and assigned to them the command of the less disciplined Italians, with whom, he believed, they could not venture to tamper. He himself assumed the lead of the Northmen—and, despite themselves, they were fascinated by his artful, yet dignified affability, and the personal courage he displayed in some sallies of the besieged Barons. But as the huntsmen upon all the subtlest windings of their prey,—so pressed the relentless and speeding Fates upon Cola di Rienzi.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVENTS GATHER TO THE END.

WHILE this the state of the camp of the besiegers, Luca di Savelli and Stefanello Colonna were closeted with a stranger, who had privately entered Palestrina on the night before the Romans pitched their tents beneath its walls. This visitor, who might have somewhat passed his fortieth year, yet retained, scarcely diminished, the uncommon beauty of form and countenance for which his youth had been remarkable. But it was no longer that character of beauty which has been described in his first introduction to the reader. It was no longer the almost woman delicacy of feature and complexion, or the high-born polish and graceful suavity of manner which distinguished Walter de Montreal : a life of vicissitude and war had at length done its work. His bearing was now abrupt and imperious, as that of one accustomed to rule wild spirits, and he had exchanged the grace of persuasion for the sternness of command. His athletic form had grown more spare and sinewy, and instead of the brow half shaded by fair and clustering curls, his forehead, though yet but slightly wrinkled, was completely bald at the temples ; and by its unwonted height, increased the dignity and manliness of his aspect. The bloom of his complexion was faded, less by outward exposure than inward thought, into a bronzed and settled paleness ; and his features seemed more marked and prominent, as the flesh had somewhat sunk from the contour of the cheek. Yet the change suited the change of age and circumstance ; and if the Provençal now less realized the idea of the brave and fair knight-errant, he but looked the more what the knight-errant had become—the sagacious counsellor and the mighty leader.

“You must be aware,” said Montreal, continuing a discourse which appeared to have made great impression on his companions, “that in this contest between yourselves and the Senator, I alone hold the balance. Rienzi is utterly in my

power—my brothers the leaders of his army ; myself his creditor. It rests with me to secure him on the throne, or to send him to the scaffold. I have but to give the order, and the Grand Company enter Rome ; but without their agency methinks if you keep faith with me, our purpose can be effected.”

“In the meanwhile, Palestrina is besieged by your brothers !” said Stefanello, sharply.

“But they have my orders to waste their time before its walls. Do you not see that, by this very siege, fruitless, as, if I will, it shall be, Rienzi loses fame abroad and popularity in Rome ?”

“Sir Knight,” said Luca di Savelli, “you speak as a man versed in the profound policy of the times ; and under all the circumstances which menace us, your proposal seems but fitting and reasonable. On the one hand, you undertake to restore us and the other Barons to Rome ; and to give Rienzi to the Staircase of the Lion——”

“Not so, not so,” replied Montreal quickly, “I will consent either so to subdue and cripple his power, as to render him a puppet in our hands, a mere shadow of authority—or, if his proud spirit chafe at its cage, to give it once more liberty amongst the wilds of Germany. I would fetter or banish him, but not destroy ; unless (added Montreal, after a moment’s pause) fate absolutely drives us to it. Power should not demand victims ; but to secure it, victims may be necessary.”

“I understand your refinements,” said Luca di Savelli, with his icy smile, “and am satisfied. The Barons once restored, our palaces once more manned, and I am willing to take the chance of the Senator’s longevity. This service you promise to effect ?”

“I do.”

“And, in return, you demand our assent to your enjoying the rank of Podesta for five years ?”

“You say right.”

“I, for one, accede to the terms,” said the Savelli : “there is my hand ; I am wearied of these brawls, even amongst ourselves, and think that a foreign ruler may best enforce order : the more especially, if like you, Sir Knight, one whose birth and renown are such as to make him comprehend the difference between Barons and Plebeians.”

"For my part," said Stefanello, "I feel that we have but a choice of evils—I like not a foreign Podesta; but I like a plebeian Senator still less;—there too is my hand, Sir Knight."

"Noble Signors," said Montreal, after a short pause, and turning his piercing gaze from one to the other with great deliberation, "our compact is sealed; one word by way of codicil. Walter de Montreal is no Count-Pepin of Minorbino! Once before, little dreaming, I own, that the victory would be so facile, I intrusted your cause and mine to a deputy; your cause he promoted, mine he lost. He drove out the Tribune, and then suffered the Barons to banish himself. This time I see to my own affairs; and, mark you, I have learned in the Grand Company one lesson; viz. never to pardon spy or deserter, of whatever rank. Your forgiveness for the hint. Let us change the theme. So ye detain in your fortress my old friend the Baron di Castello?"

"Ay," said Luca di Savelli; for Stefanello, stung by Montreal's threat, which he dared not openly resent, preserved a sullen silence; "ay, he is one noble the less to the Senator's council."

"You act wisely. I know his views and temper; at present dangerous to our interests. Yet use him well, I entreat you; he may hereafter serve us. And now, my lords, my eyes are weary, suffer me to retire. Pleasant dreams of the New Revolution to us all!"

"By your leave, noble Montreal, we will attend you to your couch," said Luca di Savelli.

"By my troth, and ye shall not. I am no Tribune to have great Signors for my pages; but a plain gentleman, and a hardy soldier: your attendants will conduct me to whatever chamber your hospitality assigns to one who could sleep soundly beneath the rudest hedge under your open skies."

Savelli, however, insisted on conducting the Podesta that was to be to his apartment. He then returned to Stefanello, whom he found pacing the saloon with long and disordered strides.

"What have we done, Savelli?" said he quickly; "sold our city to a barbarian!"

"Sold!" said Savelli; "to my mind it is the other part of the

contract in which we have played our share. We have bought, Colonna, not sold—bought our lives from yon army; bought our power, our fortunes, our castles, from the Demagogue Senator; bought what is better than all—triumph and revenge. Tush, Colonna, see you not that if we had balked this great warrior, we had perished? Leagued with the Senator, the Grand Company would have marched to Rome; and whether Montreal assisted or murdered Rienzi (for methinks he is a Romulus who would brook no Remus), *we* had equally been undone. *Now*, we have made our own terms, and our shares are equal. Nay, the first steps to be taken are in our favour. Rienzi is to be snared, and *we* are to enter Rome.”

“And then the Provençal is to be Despot of the city.”

“Podesta, if you please. Podestas who offend the people are often banished, and sometimes stoned—Podestas who insult the nobles are often stilettoed, and sometimes poisoned,” said Savelli. “‘Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.’ Meanwhile, say nothing to the bear Orsini. Such men mar all wisdom. Come, cheer thee, Stefanello.”

“Luca di Savelli, you have not such a stake in Rome as I have,” said the young Lord, haughtily; “no Podesta can take from *you* the rank of the first Signor of the Italian metropolis!”

“An you had said so to the Orsini there would have been drawing of swords,” said Savelli. “But cheer thee, I say; is not our first care to destroy Rienzi? and then, between the death of one foe and the rise of another, are there not such preventives as Ezzelino de Romano has taught to wary men? Cheer thee, I say; and, next year, if we but hold together, Stefanello Colonna and Luca di Savelli will be joint Senators of Rome, and these great men food for worms!”

While thus conferred the Barons, Montreal, ere he retired to rest, stood gazing from the open lattice of his chamber over the landscape below, which slept in the autumnal moonlight, while at a distance gleamed, pale and steady, the lights round the encampment of the besiegers.

“Wide plains and broad valleys,” thought the warrior, “soon shall ye repose in peace beneath a new sway, against which no petty tyrant shall dare rebel. And ye, white walls of canvas,

even while I gaze — *ye* admonish me how realms are won. Even as, of old, from the Nomad tents, was built up the stately Babylon¹ that 'was not till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness;' so by the new Ishmaelites of Europe shall a race, undreamt of now, be founded; and the camp of yesterday be the city of to-morrow. Verily, when, for one soft offence, the Pontiff thrust me from the bosom of the Church, little guessed he what enemy he raised to Rome! How solemn is the night!—how still the heavens and earth!—the very stars are as hushed, as if intent on the events that are to pass below! So solemn and so still feels mine own spirit, and an awe unknown till now warns me that I approach the crisis of my daring fate!

¹ Isaiah xxii.

BOOK X.

THE LION OF BASALT.

Ora voglio contare la morte del Tribuno.—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 24

Now will I narrate the death of the Tribune.—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONJUNCTION OF HOSTILE PLANETS IN THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

ON the fourth day of the siege, and after beating back to those almost impregnable walls the soldiery of the Barons, headed by the Prince of the Orsini, the Senator returned to his tent, where despatches from Rome awaited him. He ran his eye hastily over them, till he came to the last; yet each contained news that might have longer delayed the eye of a man less inured to danger. From one he learned that Alborno, whose blessing had confirmed to him the rank of Senator, had received with special favour the messengers of the Orsini and Colonna. He knew that the Cardinal, whose views connected him with the Roman Patricians, desired his downfall; but he feared not Alborno; perhaps in his secret heart he wished that any open aggression from the Pontiff's Legate might throw him wholly on the people.

He learned further, that, short as had been his absence, Pandolfo di Guido had twice addressed the populace, not in favour of the Senator, but in artful regrets of the loss to the trade of Rome in the absence of her wealthiest nobles.

"For this, then, he has deserted me," said Rienzi to himself.
"Let him beware!"

The tidings contained in the next touched him home: Walter de Montreal had openly arrived in Rome. The grasping and lawless bandit, whose rapine filled with a robber's booty every bank in Europe—whose Company was the army of a King, whose ambition, vast, unprincipled, and profound, he so well knew—whose brothers were in his camp—their treason already more than suspected;—Walter de Montreal was in Rome!

The Senator remained perfectly aghast at this new peril; and then said, setting his teeth as in a vice,

"Wild tiger, thou art in the Lion's den!" Then pausing, he broke out again, "One false step, Walter de Montreal, and all the mailed hands of the Grand Company shall not pluck thee from the abyss! But what can I do? Return to Rome—the plans of Montreal unpenetrated—no accusation against him! On what pretence can I with honour raise the siege? To leave Palestrina, is to give a triumph to the Barons—to abandon Adrian, to degrade my cause. Yet, while away from Rome, every hour breeds treason and danger. Pandulfo, Alborno, Montreal—all are at work against me. A keen and trusty spy, now;—ha, well thought of—Villani. What, ho—Angelo Villani!"

The young chamberlain appeared.

"I think," said Rienzi, "to have often heard that thou art an orphan?"

"True, my lord; the old Augustine nun who reared my boyhood has told me again and again that my parents are dead. Both noble, my lord; but I am the child of shame. And I say it often, and think of it ever, in order to make Angelo Villani remember that he has a name to win."

"Young man, serve me as you have served, and if I live you shall have no need to call yourself an orphan. Mark me! I want a friend, the Senator of Rome wants a friend—only one friend—gentle Heaven! only one!"

Angelo sank on his knee, and kissed the mantle of his lord.

"Say a follower. I am too mean to be Rienzi's friend."

"Too mean!—go to!—there is nothing mean before God,

unless it be a base soul under high titles. With me, boy, there is but one nobility, and Nature signs its charter. Listen : thou hearest daily of Walter de Montreal, brother to these Provençals—great captain of great robbers ? ”

“ Ay, and I have seen him, my lord.”

“ Well, then, he is in Rome. Some daring thought—some well-supported and deep-schemed villany, could alone make that bandit venture openly into an Italian city, whose territories he ravaged by fire and sword a few months back. But his brothers have lent me money—assisted my return ;—for their own ends, it is true : but the seeming obligation gives them real power. These Northern swordsmen would cut my throat if the Great Captain bade them. He counts on my supposed weakness. I know him of old. I suspect—nay, I read, his projects ; but I cannot prove them. Without proof, I cannot desert Palestrina in order to accuse and seize him. Thou art shrewd, thoughtful, acute ; couldst thou go to Rome ?—watch day and night his movements—see if he receive messengers from Albornoze or the Barons—if he confer with Pandulfo di Guido ; watch his lodgment, I say, night and day. He affects no concealment : your task will be less difficult than it seems. Apprise the Signora of all you learn. Give me your news daily. Will you undertake this mission ? ”

“ I will, my lord.”

“ To horse, then, quick !—and mind—save the wife of my bosom I have no confidant in Rome.”

CHAPTER II.

MONTREAL AT ROME.—HIS RECEPTION OF ANGELO VILLANI.

THE danger that threatened Rienzi by the arrival of Montreal was indeed formidable. The knight of St. John, having marched his army into Lombardy, had placed it at the disposal of the Venetian State in its war with the Archbishop of Milan. For this service he received an immense sum : while he provided winter quarters for his troop, for whom he proposed ample work

in the ensuing spring. Leaving Palestrina secretly and in disguise, with but a slender train, which met him at Tivoli, Montreal repaired to Rome. His ostensible object was, partly to congratulate the Senator on his return, partly to receive the moneys lent to Rienzi by his brother.

His secret object we have partly seen ; but not contented with the support of the Barons, he trusted by the corrupting means of his enormous wealth, to form a third party in support of his own ulterior designs. Wealth indeed, in that age and in that land, was scarcely less the purchaser of diadems than it had been in the later days of the Roman Empire. And in many a city torn by hereditary feuds, the hatred of faction rose to that extent, that a foreign tyrant, willing and able to expel one party, might obtain at least the temporary submission of the other. His after-success was greatly in proportion to his power to maintain his state by a force which was independent of the citizens, and by a treasury which did not require the odious recruit of taxes. But more avaricious than ambitious, more cruel than firm, it was by griping exaction, or unnecessary bloodshed, that such usurpers usually fell.

Montreal, who had scanned the frequent revolutions of the time with a calm and investigating eye, trusted that he should be enabled to avoid both these errors : and, as the reader has already seen, he had formed the profound and sagacious project of consolidating his usurpation by an utterly new race of nobles who, serving him by the feudal tenure of the North, and ever ready to protect him, because in so doing they protected their own interests, should assist to erect, not the rotten and unsupported fabric of a single tyranny, but the strong fortress of a new, hardy, and compact Aristocratic State. Thus had the great dynasties of the North been founded ; in which a King, though seemingly curbed by the Barons, was in reality supported by a common interest, whether against a subdued population or a foreign invasion.

Such were the vast schemes—extending into yet wider fields of glory and conquest, bounded only by the Alps—with which the Captain of the Grand Company beheld the columns and arches of the Seven-hilled city.

No fear disturbed the long current of his thoughts. His brothers were the leaders of Rienzi's hireling army—that army were his creatures. Over Rienzi himself he assumed the right of a creditor. Thus against one party he deemed himself secure. For the friends of the Pope, he had supported himself with private, though cautious letters from Albornoz, who desired only to make use of him for the return of the Roman Barons; and with the heads of the latter we have already witnessed his negotiations. Thus was he fitted, as he thought, to examine, to tamper with all parties, and to select from each the materials necessary for his own objects.

The open appearance of Montreal excited in Rome no inconsiderable sensation. The friends of the Barons gave out that Rienzi was in league with the Grand Company; and that he was to sell the Imperial City to the plunder and pillage of Barbarian robbers. The effrontery with which Montreal (against whom, more than once, the Pontiff had thundered his bulls) appeared in the Metropolitan City of the Church was made yet more insolent by the recollection of that stern justice which had led the Tribune to declare open war against all the robbers of Italy: and this audacity was linked with the obvious reflection, that the brothers of the bold Provençal were the instruments of Rienzi's return. So quickly spread suspicion through the city, that Montreal's presence alone would in a few weeks have sufficed to ruin the Senator. Meanwhile, the natural boldness of Montreal silenced every whisper of prudence; and, blinded by the dazzle of his hopes, the Knight of St. John, as if to give double importance to his coming, took up his residence in a sumptuous palace, and his retinue rivalled, in the splendour of garb and pomp, the display of Rienzi himself in his earlier and more brilliant power.

Amidst the growing excitement, Angelo Villani arrived at Rome. The character of this young man had been formed by his peculiar circumstances. He possessed qualities which often mark the illegitimate as with a common stamp. He was insolent—like most of those who hold a doubtful rank; and while ashamed of his bastardy, was arrogant of the supposed nobility of his unknown parentage. The universal ferment and agitation

of Italy at that day rendered ambition the most common of all the passions, and thus ambition, in all its many shades and varieties, forces itself into our delineations of character in this history. Though not for Angelo Villani were the dreams of the more lofty and generous order of that sublime infirmity, he was strongly incited by the desire and resolve to *rise*. He had warm affections and grateful impulses; and his fidelity to his patron had been carried to a virtue: but from his irregulated and desultory education, and the reckless profligacy of those with whom, in ante-chambers and guard-rooms, much of his youth had been passed, he had neither high principles nor an enlightened honour. Like most Italians, cunning and shrewd, he scrupled not at any deceit that served a purpose or a friend. His strong attachment to Rienzi had been unconsciously increased by the gratification of pride and vanity, flattered by the favour of so celebrated a man. Both self-interest and attachment urged him to every effort to promote the views and safety of one at once his benefactor and patron; and on undertaking his present mission, his only thought was to fulfil it with the most complete success. Far more brave and daring than was common with the Italians, something of the hardihood of an Ultramontane race gave nerve and vigour to his craft; and from what his art suggested, his courage never shrank.

When Rienzi had first detailed to him the objects of his present task, he instantly called to mind his adventure with the tall soldier in the crowd at Avignon. "If ever thou wantest a friend, seek him in Walter de Montreal," were words that had often rung in his ear, and they now recurred to him with prophetic distinctness. He had no doubt that it was Montreal himself whom he had seen. Why the Great Captain should have taken this interest in him, Angelo little cared to conjecture. Most probably it was but a crafty pretence—one of the common means by which the Chief of the Grand Company attracted to himself the youths of Italy, as well as the warriors of the North. He only thought now how he could turn the Knight's promise to account. What more easy than to present himself to Montreal—remind him of the words—enter his service—and thus effectually watch his conduct? The office of spy was not that which

would have pleased every mind, but it shocked not the fastidiousness of Angelo Villani; and the fearful hatred with which his patron had often spoken of the avaricious and barbarian robber—the scourge of his native land,—had infected the young man, who had much of the arrogant and mock patriotism of the Romans, with a similar sentiment. More vindictive even than grateful, he bore, too, a secret grudge against Montreal's brothers, whose rough address had often wounded his pride: and, above all, his early recollections of the fear and execration in which Ursula seemed ever to hold the terrible Fra Moreale, impressed him with a vague belief of some ancient wrong to himself or his race, perpetrated by the Provençal, which he was not ill-pleased to have the occasion to avenge. In truth, the words of Ursula, mystic and dark as they were in their denunciation, had left upon Villani's boyish impressions an unaccountable feeling of antipathy and hatred to the man it was now his object to betray. For the rest, every device seemed to him decorous and justifiable, so that it saved his master, served his country, and advanced himself.

Montreal was alone in his chamber when it was announced to him that a young Italian craved an audience. Professionally open to access, he forthwith gave admission to the applicant.

The Knight of St. John instantly recognised the page he had encountered at Avignon; and when Angelo Villani said, with easy boldness, "I have come to remind Sir Walter de Montreal of a promise——" the Knight interrupted him with cordial frankness—"Thou needest not—I remember it. Dost thou now require my friendship?"

"I do, noble Signor!" answered Angelo; "I know not where else to seek a patron."

"Canst thou read and write? I fear me not."

"I have been taught those arts," replied Villani.

"It is well. Is thy birth gentle?"

"It is."

"Better still;—thy name?"

"Angelo Villani."

"I take thy blue eyes and low broad brow," said Montreal, with a slight sigh, "in pledge of thy truth. Henceforth, Angelo

Villani, thou art in the list of my secretaries. Another time thou shalt tell me more of thyself. Thy service dates from this day. For the rest, no man ever wanted wealth who served Walter de Montreal; nor advancement, if he served him faithfully. My closet, through yonder door, is thy waiting room. Ask for, and send hither, Lusignan of Lyons; he is my chief scribe, and will see to thy comforts, and instruct thee in thy business."

Angelo withdrew—Montreal's eye followed him.

"A strange likeness!" said he, musingly and sadly; "my heart leaps to that boy!"

CHAPTER III.

MONTREAL'S BANQUET.

SOME few days after the date of the last chapter, Rienzi received news from Rome, which seemed to produce in him a joyous and elated excitement. His troops still lay before Palestrina, and still the banners of the Barons waved over its unconquered walls. In truth, the Italians employed half their time in brawls amongst themselves; the Velletritrani had feuds with the people of Tivoli, and the Romans were still afraid of conquering the Barons.—"The hornet," said they, "stings worse after he is dead; and neither an Orsini, a Savelli, nor a Colonna, was ever known to forgive."

Again and again had the captains of his army assured the indignant Senator that the fortress was impregnable, and that time and money were idly wasted upon the siege. Rienzi knew better, but he concealed his thoughts.

He now summoned to his tent the brothers of Provence, and announced to them his intention of returning instantly to Rome. "The mercenaries shall continue the siege under our Lieutenant, and you, with my Roman Legion, shall accompany me. Your brother, Sir Walter, and I, both want your presence; we have

affairs to arrange between us. After a few days I shall raise recruits in the city, and return."

This was what the brothers desired; they approved, with evident joy, the Senator's proposition.

Rienzi next sent for the lieutenant of his body-guard, the same Riccardo Annibaldi whom the reader will remember in the earlier part of this work, as the antagonist of Montreal's lance. This young man—one of the few nobles who espoused the cause of the Senator—had evinced great courage and military ability, and promised fair (should Fate spare his life¹) to become one of the best Captains of his time.

"Dear Annibaldi," said Rienzi; "at length I can fulfil the project on which we have privately conferred. I take with me to Rome the two Provençal Captains—I leave you chief of the army. Palestrina will yield now—eh!—ha, ha, ha!—Palestrina will yield now!"

"By my right hand, I think so, Senator," replied Annibaldi. "These foreigners have hitherto only stirred up quarrels amongst ourselves, and if not cowards are certainly traitors!"

"Hush, hush, hush! Traitors! The learned Arimbaldò, the brave Brettone, traitors! Fie on it! No, no; they are very excellent, honourable men, but not lucky in the camp;—not lucky in the camp;—better speed to them in the city! And now to business."

The Senator then detailed to Annibaldi the plan he himself had formed for taking the town, and the military skill of Annibaldi at once recognised its feasibility.

With his Roman troop and Montreal's brothers, one at either hand, Rienzi then departed to Rome.

That night Montreal gave a banquet to Pandulfo di Guido, and to certain of the principal citizens, whom one by one he had already sounded, and found hollow at heart to the cause of the Senator.

Pandulfo sate at the right hand of the Knight of St. John, and Montreal lavished upon him the most courteous attentions.

¹ It appears that this was the same Annibaldi who was afterwards slain in an affray: Petrarch lauds his valour and laments his fate.

"Pledge me in this—it is from the Vale of Chiana, near Monte Pulciano," said Montreal. "I think I have heard bookmen say (you know, Signor Pandulfo, we ought all to be bookmen now!) that the site was renowned of old. In truth, the wine hath a racy flavour."

"I hear," said Bruttini, one of the lesser Barons (a staunch friend to the Colonna), "that in this respect the innkeeper's son has put his book-learning to some use: he knows every place where the wine grows richest."

"What! the Senator is turned wine-bibber!" said Montreal, quaffing a vast goblet full; "that must unfit him for business—'tis a pity."

"Verily, yes," said Pandulfo; "a man at the head of a state should be temperate—I never drink wine unmixed."

"Ah," whispered Montreal, "if your calm good sense ruled Rome, then, indeed, the metropolis of Italy might taste of peace. Signor Vivaldi,"—and the host turned towards a wealthy draper,—“these disturbances are bad for trade.”

"Very, very!" groaned the draper.

"The Barons are your best customers," quoth the minor noble.

"Much, much!" said the draper.

"'Tis a pity that they are thus roughly expelled," said Montreal, in a melancholy tone. "Would it not be possible, if the Senator (*I* drink his health) were less rash—less zealous, rather,—to unite free institutions with the return of the Barons?—*such* should be the task of a truly wise statesman."

"It surely might be possible," returned Vivaldi; "the Savelli alone spend more with me than all the rest of Rome."

"I know not if it be possible," said Bruttini; "but I do know that it is an outrage to all decorum that an innkeeper's son should be enabled to make a solitude of the palaces of Rome."

"It certainly seems to indicate too vulgar a desire of mob favour," said Montreal. "However, I trust we shall harmonize all these differences. Rienzi, perhaps,—nay, doubtless, *means* well!"

"I would," said Vivaldi, who had received his cue, "that we might form a mixed constitution—Plebeians and Patricians, each in their separate order."

"But," said Montreal, gravely, "so new an experiment would demand great physical force."

"Why, true; but we might call in an umpire—a foreigner who had no interest in either faction—who might protect the new *Buono Stato*; a Podesta, as we have done before—Brancaleone, for instance. How well and wisely he ruled! that was a golden age for Rome. A Podesta for ever!—that's my theory."

"You need not seek far for the president of your council," said Montreal, smiling at Pandulfo; "a citizen at once popular, well-born, and wealthy, may be found at my right hand."

Pandulfo hemmed and coloured.

Montreal proceeded. "A committee of trades might furnish an honourable employment to Signor Vivaldi; and the treatment of all foreign affairs—the employment of armies, &c., might be left to the Barons, with a more open competition, Signor di Bruttini, to the Barons of the second order than has hitherto been conceded to their birth and importance. Sirs, will you taste the Malvoisie?"

"Still," said Vivaldi, after a pause—(Vivaldi anticipated at least the supplying with cloth the whole of the Grand Company)—"still, such a moderate and well-digested constitution would never be acceded to by Rienzi."

"Why should it? what need of Rienzi?" exclaimed Bruttini. "Rienzi may take another trip to Bohemia."

"Gently, gently," said Montreal; "I do not despair. All open violence against the Senator would strengthen his power. No, no, humble him—admit the Barons, and then insist on your own terms. Between the two factions you might then establish a fitting balance. And in order to keep your new constitution from the encroachment of either extreme, there *are* warriors and knights, too, who for a certain rank in the great city of Rome would maintain horse and foot at its service. We Ultramontanes are often harshly judged; we are wanderers and Ishmaelites solely because we have no honourable place of rest. Now, if I——"

"Ay, if you, noble Montreal!" said Vivaldi.

The company remained hushed in breathless attention, when

suddenly there was heard—deep, solemn, muffled,—the great bell of the Capitol!

“Hark!” said Vivaldi, “the bell: it tolls for execution: an unwonted hour!”

“Sure, the Senator has not returned!” exclaimed Pandolfo di Guido, turning pale.

“No, no,” quoth Bruttini, “it is but a robber, caught two nights ago in Romagna. I heard that he was to die to-night.”

At the word “robber,” Montreal changed countenance slightly. The wine circulated—the bell continued to toll—its suddenness over, it ceased to alarm. Conversation flowed again.

“What were you saying, Sir Knight?” said Vivaldi.

“Why, let me think on’t;—oh, speaking of the necessity of supporting a new state by force, I said that if *I*——”

“Ah, that was it!” quoth Bruttini, thumping the table.

“If *I* were summoned to your aid—*summoned*, mind ye, and absolved by the Pope’s Legate of my former sins—(they weigh heavily on me, gentles)—I would myself guard your city from foreign foe and civil disturbance, with my gallant swordsmen. Not a Roman citizen should contribute a ‘danaro’ to the cost.”

“*Viva Fra Moreale!*” cried Bruttini; and the shout was echoed by all the boon companies.

“Enough for me,” continued Montreal, “to expiate my offences. Ye know, gentlemen, my order is vowed to God and the Church—a warrior monk am I! Enough for me to expiate my offences, I say, in the defence of the Holy City. Yet I, too, have my private and more earthly views,—who is above them? *I*——the bell changes its note!”

“It is but the change that preludes execution—the poor robber is about to die!”

Montreal crossed himself, and resumed:—“I am a knight and a noble,” said he, proudly; “the profession I have followed is that of arms; but—I will not disguise it—mine equals have regarded me as one who has stained his scutcheon by too reckless a pursuit of glory and of gain. I wish to reconcile myself

with my order—to purchase a new name—to vindicate myself to the Grand Master and the Pontiff. I have had hints, gentles,—hints, that I might best promote my interest by restoring order to the Papal metropolis. The Legate Albornozi (here is his letter) recommends me to keep watch upon the Senator.”

“Surely,” interrupted Pandulfo, “I hear steps below.”

“The mob going to the robber’s execution,” said Bruttini; “proceed, Sir Knight!”

“And,” continued Montreal, surveying his audience before he proceeded farther, “what think ye—(I do but ask your opinion, wiser than mine)—what think ye, as a fitting precaution against too arbitrary a power in the Senator—what think ye of the return of the Colonna, and the bold Barons of Palestrina?”

“Here’s to their health!” cried Vivaldi, rising.

As by a sudden impulse, the company rose. “To the health of the besieged Barons!” was shouted aloud.

“Next, what if—(I do but humbly suggest)—what if you gave the Senator a colleague?—it is no affront to him. It was but as yesterday that one of the Colonna, who was Senator, received a colleague in Bertoldo Orsini.”

“A most wise precaution,” cried Vivaldi. “And where a colleague like Pandulfo di Guido?”

“*Viva Pandulfo di Guido!*” cried the guests, and again their goblets were drained to the bottom.

“And if in this I can assist ye by fair words with the Senator (ye know he owes me moneys—my brothers have served him) command Walter de Montreal.”

“And if fair words fail?” said Vivaldi.

“The Grand Company—(heed me, ye are the councillors)—the Grand Company is accustomed to forced marches!”

“*Viva Fra Moreale!*” cried Bruttini and Vivaldi, simultaneously. “A health to all, my friends;” continued Bruttini; “a health to the Barons, Rome’s old friends; to Pandulfo di Guido, the Senator’s new colleague; and to Fra Moreale, Rome’s new Podesta.”

“The bell has ceased,” said Vivaldi, putting down his goblet.

“Heaven have mercy on the robber!” added Bruttini.

Scarce had he spoken, ere three taps were heard at the door—the guests looked at each other in dumb amaze.

“New guests !” said Montreal. “I asked some trusty friends to join us this evening. By my faith they are welcome ! Enter !”

The door opened slowly ; three by three entered, in complete armour, the guards of the Senator. On they marched, regular and speechless. They surrounded the festive board—they filled the spacious hall, and the lights of the banquet were reflected upon their corselets as on a wall of steel.

Not a syllable was uttered by the feasters, they were as it turned to a stone. Presently the guards gave way, and Rienzi himself appeared. He approached the table, and folding his arms, turned his gaze deliberately from guest to guest, till at last, his eyes rested on Montreal, who had also risen, and who alone of the party had recovered the amaze of the moment.

And, there, as these two men, each so celebrated, so proud, able, and ambitious, stood front to front—it was literally as if the rival Spirits of Force and Intellect, Order and Strife, of the Falchion and the Fasces—the Antagonist Principles by which empires are ruled and empires overthrown, had met together, incarnate and opposed. They stood, both silent,—as if fascinated by each other’s gaze,—loftier in stature, and nobler in presence than all around.

Montreal spoke first, and with a forced smile.

“Senator of Rome!—dare I believe that my poor banquet tempts thee, and may I trust that these armed men are a graceful compliment to one to whom arms have been a pastime ?”

Rienzi answered not, but waved his hand to his guards.

Montreal was seized on the instant. Again he surveyed the guests—as a bird from the rattle-snake,—shrunk Pandulfo di Guido, trembling, motionless, aghast, from the glittering eye of the Senator. Slowly Rienzi raised his fatal hand towards the unhappy citizen—Pandulfo saw,—felt his doom,—shrieked,—and fell senseless in the arms of the soldiers.

One other and rapid glance cast the Senator round the board, and then, with a disdainful smile, as if anxious for no meaner

prey, turned away. Not a breath had hitherto passed his lips—all had been dumb show—and his grim silence had imparted a more freezing terror to his unguessed-for apparition. Only, when he reached the door, he turned back, gazed upon the Knight of St. John's bold and undaunted face, and said, almost in a whisper, "Walter de Montreal!—you heard the death-knell!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE SENTENCE OF WALTER DE MONTREAL.

IN silence the Captain of the Grand Company was borne to the prison of the Capitol. In the same building lodged the rivals for the government of Rome; the one occupied the prison, the other the palace. The guards forbore the ceremony of fetters, and leaving a lamp on the table, Montreal perceived he was not alone,—his brothers had preceded him.

"We are happily met," said the Knight of St. John; "we have passed together pleasanter nights than this is likely to be."

"Can you jest, Walter?" said Arimbaldo, half-weeping. "Know you not that our doom is fixed? Death scowls upon us."

"Death!" repeated Montreal, and for the first time his countenance changed; perhaps for the first time in his life he felt the thrill and agony of fear.

"Death!" he repeated again. "Impossible! He dare not, Brettone; the soldiers, the Northmen!—they will mutiny, they will pluck us back from the grasp of the headsman!"

"Cast from you so vain a hope," said Brettone sullenly; "the soldiers are encamped at Palestrina."

"How! Dolt—fool! Came you then to Rome *alone*! Are we *alone* with this dread man?"

"*You* are the dolt! Why came you hither?" answered the brother.

"Why, indeed! but that I knew thou wast the Captain of the army; and—but thou saidst right—the folly is mine, to have

played against the crafty Tribune so unequal a brain as thine Enough! Reproaches are idle. When were ye arrested?"

"At dusk—the instant we entered the gates of Rome. Rienzi entered privately."

"Humph! What can he know against me? Who can have betrayed me? My secretaries are tried—all trustworthy—except that youth, and he so seemingly zealous—that Angelo Villani!"

"Villani! Angelo Villani!" cried the brothers in a breath. "Hast thou confided aught to him?"

"Why, I fear he must have seen—at least in part—my correspondence with you, and with the Barons—he was among my scribes. Know you aught of him?"

"Walter, Heaven hath demented you!" returned Brettone. "Angelo Villani is the favourite menial of the Senator."

"Those eyes deceived me, then," muttered Montreal, solemnly and shuddering; "and, as if *her* ghost had returned to earth, God smites me from the grave!"

There was a long silence. At length Montreal, whose bold and sanguine temper was never long clouded, spoke again.

"Are the Senator's coffers full?—But that is impossible."

"Bare as a Dominican's."

"We are saved then. He shall name his price for our heads. Money must be more useful to him than blood."

And as if with that thought all further meditation were rendered unnecessary, Montreal doffed his mantle, uttered a short prayer, and flung himself on a pallet in a corner of the cell.

"I have slept on worse beds," said the Knight, stretching himself; and in a few minutes he was fast asleep.

The brothers listened to his deep-drawn, but regular breathing, with envy and wonder, but they were in no mood to converse. Still and speechless, they sate like statues beside the sleeper. Time passed on, and the first cold air of the hour that succeeds to midnight crept through the bars of their cell. The bolts crashed, the door opened, six men-at-arms entered, passed the brothers, and one of them touched Montreal.

"Ha!" said he, still sleeping, but turning round. "Ha!"

said he, in the soft Provençal tongue, "sweet Adeline, we will not rise yet—it is so long since we met!"

"What says he?" muttered the guard, shaking Montreal roughly. The Knight sprang up at once, and his hand grasped the head of his bed as for his sword. He stared round bewildered, rubbed his eyes, and then gazing on the guard, became alive to the present.

"Ye are early risers in the Capitol," said he. "What want ye of me?"

"*It* waits you!"

"*It*! What?" said Montreal.

"The rack!" replied the soldier, with a malignant scowl.

The Great Captain said not a word. He looked for one moment at the six swordsmen, as if measuring his single strength against theirs. His eye then wandered round the room. The rudest bar of iron would have been dearer to him than he had ever yet found the proofest steel of Milan. He completed his survey with a sigh, threw his mantle over his shoulders, nodded at his brethren, and followed the guard.

In a hall of the Capitol, hung with the ominous silk of white rays on a blood-red ground, sate Rienzi and his councillors. Across a recess was drawn a black curtain.

"Walter de Montreal," said a small man at the foot of the table, "Knight of the illustrious order of St. John of Jerusalem——"

"And Captain of the Grand Company!" added the prisoner, in a firm voice.

"You stand accused of divers counts: robbery and murder, in Tuscany, Romagna, and Apulia——"

"For robbery and murder, brave men, and belted knights," said Montreal, drawing himself up, "would use the words 'war and victory.' To those charges I plead guilty! Proceed."

"You are next accused of treasonable conspiracy against the liberties of Rome for the restoration of the proscribed Barons—and of traitorous correspondence with Stefanello Colonna at Palestrina."

"My accuser?"

"Step forth, Angelo Villani!"

"*You* are my betrayer then?" said Montreal steadily. "I deserved this. I beseech you, Senator of Rome, let this young man retire. I confess my correspondence with the Colonna, and my desire to restore the Barons."

Rienzi motioned to Villani, who bowed and withdrew.

"There rests only then for you, Walter de Montreal, to relate, fully and faithfully, the details of your conspiracy."

"That is impossible," replied Montreal, carelessly.

"And why?"

"Because, doing as I please with my own life, I will not betray the lives of others."

"Bethink thee—thou wouldst have betrayed the life of thy judge!"

"Not betrayed—thou didst not trust me."

"The law, Walter de Montreal, hath sharp inquisitors—behold!"

The black curtain was drawn aside, and the eye of Montreal rested on the executioner and the rack! His proud breast heaved indignantly.

"Senator of Rome," said he, "these instruments are for serfs and villeins. I have been a warrior and a leader; life and death have been in my hands—I have used them as I listed; but to mine equal and my foe, I never proffered the insult of the rack."

"Sir Walter de Montreal," returned the Senator, gravely, but with some courteous respect, "your answer is that which rises naturally to the lips of brave men. But learn from me, whom fortune hath made thy judge, that no more for serf and villein, than for knight and noble, are such instruments the engines of law, or the tests of truth. I yielded but to the desire of these reverend councillors, to test thy nerves. But, wert thou the meanest peasant of the Campagna, before my judgment-seat thou needst not apprehend the torture. Walter de Montreal, among the Princes of Italy thou hast known, amongst the Roman Barons thou wouldst have aided, is there one who could make that boast?"

"I desired only," said Montreal, with some hesitation, "to unite the Barons *with* thee; nor did I intrigue against thy *life*!"

Rienzi frowned—"Enough," he said, hastily. "Knight of St.

John, I *know* thy secret projects, subterfuge and evasion neither befit nor avail thee. If thou didst not intrigue against my life, thou didst intrigue against the life of Rome. Thou hast but one favour left to demand on earth, it is the manner of thy death."

Montreal's lip worked convulsively.

"Senator," said he, in a low voice, "may I crave audience with thee *alone* for one minute?"

The councillors looked up.

"My Lord," whispered the eldest of them, "doubtless he hath concealed weapons—trust him not."

"Prisoner," returned Rienzi, after a moment's pause; "if thou seekest for mercy thy request is idle, and before my coadjutors I have no secret! speak out what thou hast to say!"

"Yet listen to me," said the prisoner, folding his arms, "it concerns not my life, but Rome's welfare."

"Then," said Rienzi, in an altered tone, "thy request is granted. Thou mayst add to thy guilt the design of the assassin, but for Rome I would dare greater danger."

So saying, he motioned to the councillors, who slowly withdrew by the door which had admitted Villani, while the guards retired to the farthest extremity of the hall.

"Now, Walter de Montreal, be brief, for thy time is short."

"Senator," said Montreal, my life can but little profit you; men will say that you destroyed your creditor in order to cancel your debt. Fix a sum upon my life, estimate it at the price of a monarch's; every florin shall be paid to you, and your treasury will be filled for five years to come. If the '*Buono Stato*' depends on your government, what I have asked, your solicitude for Rome will not permit you to refuse."

"You mistake me, bold robber," said Rienzi sternly; "your *treason* I could guard against, and therefore forgive; your *ambition*, never! Mark me, I know you! Place your hand on your heart and say whether, could we change places, you, as Rienzi, would suffer all the gold of earth to purchase the life of Walter de Montreal? For men's reading of my conduct, that must I bear; for mine own reading, mine eyes must be purged from corruption. I am answerable to God for the trust of Rome. And Rome trembles while the head of the

Grand Company lives in the plotting brain and the daring heart of Walter de Montreal. Man—wealthy, great, and subtle as you are, your hours are numbered ; with the rise of the sun you die !”

Montreal's eyes, fixed upon the Senator's face, saw hope was over ; his pride and his fortitude returned to him.

“We have wasted words,” said he. “I played for a great stake, I have lost, and must pay the forfeit ! I am prepared. On the threshold of the Unknown World, the dark spirit of prophecy rushes into us. Lord Senator, I go before thee to announce—that in Heaven or in Hell—ere many days be over, room must be given to one mightier than I am !”

As he spoke, his form dilated, his eye glared ; and Rienzi, cowering as never he had cowered before, shrunk back, and shaded his face with his hand.

“The manner of your death ?” he asked, in a hollow voice.

“The axe : it is that which befits knight and warrior. For thee, Senator, Fate hath a less noble death.”

“Robber, be dumb !” cried Rienzi, passionately. “Guards, bear back the prisoner. At sunrise, Montreal——”

“Sets the sun of the scourge of Italy,” said the Knight, bitterly. “Be it so. One request more ; the Knights of St. John claim affinity with the Augustine order ; grant me an Augustine confessor.”

“It is granted ; and in return for thy denunciations, I, who can give thee no earthly mercy, will implore the Judge of all for pardon to thy soul !”

“Senator, I have done with man's mediation. My brethren ? Their deaths are not necessary to thy safety or thy revenge !”

Rienzi mused a moment : “No,” said he, “dangerous tools they were, but without the workman they may rust unharmed. They served me once, too. Prisoner, their lives are spared.”

CHAPTER V.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE Council was broken up—Rienzi hastened to his own apartments. Meeting Villani by the way, he pressed the youth's hand affectionately. "You have saved Rome and me from great peril," said he! "the saints reward you!" Without tarrying for Villani's answer, he hurried on. Nina, anxious and perturbed, awaited him in their chamber.

"Not a-bed yet?" said he: "fie, Nina, even thy beauty will not stand these vigils."

"I could not rest till I had seen thee. I hear (all Rome has heard it ere this) that thou hast seized Walter de Montreal, and that he will perish by the headsman."

"The first robber that ever died so brave a death," returned Rienzi, slowly unrobing himself.

"Cola, I have never crossed your schemes,—your policy, even by a suggestion. Enough for me to triumph in their success, to mourn for their failure. Now, I ask thee one request—spare me the life of this man."

"Nina——"

"Hear me,—for thee I speak! Despite his crimes, his valour and his genius have gained him admirers, even amongst his foes. Many a prince, many a state that secretly rejoices at his fall, will affect horror against his judge. Hear me farther; his brothers aided your return; the world will term you ungrateful. His brothers lent you moneys, the world—(out on it!)—will term you——"

"Hold!" interrupted the Senator. "All that thou sayest, my mind forestalled. But thou knowest me—to thee I have no disguise. No compact can bind Montreal's faith—no mercy win his gratitude. Before his red right hand truth and justice are swept away. If I condemn Montreal I incur disgrace and risk danger—granted. If I release him, ere the first showers of April, the chargers of the Northmen will neigh in the halls of the Capitol.

Which shall I hazard in this alternative, myself or Rome? Ask me no more—to bed, to bed!”

“Couldst thou read my forebodings, Cola, mystic—gloomy—unaccountable?”

“Forebodings!—I have mine,” answered Rienzi, sadly, gazing on space, as if his thoughts peopled it with spectres. Then, raising his eyes to Heaven, he said with that fanatical energy which made much both of his strength and weakness—“Lord, mine at least not the sin of Saul! the Amalekite shall not be saved!”

While Rienzi enjoyed a short, troubled, and restless sleep, over which Nina watched—unslumbering, anxious, tearful, and oppressed with dark and terrible forewarnings—the accuser was more happy than the judge. The last thoughts that floated before the young mind of Angelo Villani, ere wrapped in sleep, were bright and sanguine. He felt no honourable remorse that he had entrapped the confidence of another—he felt only that his scheme had prospered, that his mission had been fulfilled. The grateful words of Rienzi rang in his ear, and hopes of fortune and power, beneath the sway of the Roman Senator, lulled him into slumber, and coloured all his dreams.

Scarce, however, had he been two hours asleep, ere he was wakened by one of the attendants of the palace, himself half awake. “Pardon me, Messere Villani,” said he, “but there is a messenger below from the good Sister Ursula; he bids thee haste instantly to the convent—she is sick unto death, and has tidings that crave thy immediate presence.”

Angelo, whose morbid susceptibility as to his parentage was ever excited by vague but ambitious hopes—started up, dressed hurriedly, and joining the messenger below, repaired to the Convent. In the Court of the Capitol, and by the Staircase of the Lion, was already heard the noise of the workmen, and looking back, Villani beheld the scaffold, hung with black—sleeping cloudlike in the grey light of dawn—at the same time the bell of the Capitol tolled heavily. A pang shot athwart him. He hurried on;—despite the immature earliness of the hour, he met groups of either sex, hastening along the streets to witness the execution of the redoubted Captain of the Grand Company. The Convent of the Augustines was at the farthest extremity of that city,

even then so extensive, and the red light upon the hill tops already heralded the rising sun, ere the young man reached the venerable porch. His name obtained him instant admittance.

"Heaven grant," said an old nun, who conducted him through a long and winding passage, "that thou mayst bring comfort to the sick sister : she has pined for thee grievously since matins."

In a cell set apart for the reception of visitors (from the outward world), to such of the Sisterhood as received the necessary dispensation, sate the aged nun. Angelo had only seen her once since his return to Rome, and since then disease had made rapid havoc on her form and features. And now, in her shroud-like garments and attenuated frame, she seemed by the morning light as a spectre whom day had surprised above the earth. She approached the youth, however, with a motion more elastic and rapid than seemed possible to her worn and ghastly form. "Thou art come," she said. "Well, well ! This morning, after matins, my confessor, an Augustine, who alone knows the secrets of my life, took me aside, and told me that Walter de Montreal had been seized by the Senator—that he was adjudged to die, and that one of the Augustine brotherhood had been sent for to attend his last hours—is it so ?"

"Thou wert told aright," said Angelo, wonderingly. "The man at whose name thou wert wont to shudder—against whom thou hast so often warned me—will die at sunrise."

"So soon!—so soon!—Oh, Mother of Mercy! fly! thou art about the person of the Senator, thou hast high favour with him ; fly ! down on thy knees—and as thou hopest for God's grace, rise not till thou hast won the Provençal's life."

"She raves," muttered Angelo, with white lips.

"I do *not* rave,—boy!" screeched the Sister, wildly, "know that my daughter was his leman. He disgraced our house,—a house haughtier than his own. Sinner that I was, I vowed revenge. His boy—they had only one!—was brought up in a robber's camp ;—a life of bloodshed—a death of doom—a futurity of hell—were before him. I plucked the child from such a fate—I bore him away—I told the father he was dead—I placed him in the path to honourable fortunes. May my sin be forgiven me ! Angelo Villani, thou art that child ;—Walter de Montreal is

thy father. But now trembling on the verge of death, I shudder at the vindictive thoughts I once nourished. Perhaps——”

“Sinner and accursed !” interrupted Villani, with a loud shout :—“sinner and accursed thou art indeed ! Know that it was *I* who betrayed thy daughter’s lover !—by the son’s treason dies the father !”

Not a moment more did he tarry : he waited not to witness the effect his words produced. As one frantic—as one whom a fiend possesses or pursues—he rushed from the Convent—he flew through the desolate streets. The death-bell came, first indistinct, then loud, upon his ear. Every sound seemed to him like the curse of God ; on—on—he passed the more deserted quarter—crowds swept before him—he was mingled with the living stream, delayed, pushed back—thousands on thousands around, before him. Breathless, gasping, he still pressed on—he forced his way—he heard not—he saw not—all was like a dream. Up burst the sun over the distant hills—the bell ceased ! From right to left he pushed aside the crowd—his strength was as a giant’s. He neared the fatal spot. A dead hush lay like a heavy air over the multitude. He heard a voice, as he pressed along, deep and clear—it was the voice of his father !—it ceased—the audience breathed heavily—they murmured—they swayed to and fro. On, on, went Angelo Villani. The guards of the Senator stopped his way ;—he dashed aside their pikes—he eluded their grasp—he pierced the armed barrier—he stood on the Place of the Capitol. “Hold, hold !” he would have cried—but horror struck him dumb. He beheld the gleaming axe—he saw the bended neck. Ere another breath passed his lips, a ghastly and trunkless face was raised on high—Walter de Montreal was no more !

Villani saw—swooned not—shrunk not—breathed not !—but he turned his eyes from that lifted head, dropping gore, to the balcony, in which, according to custom, sate, in solemn pomp, the Senator of Rome—and the face of that young man was as the face of a demon !

“Ha !” said he, muttering to himself, and recalling the words of Rienzi seven years before—“*Blessed art thou who hast no blood of kindred to avenge !*”

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUSPENSE.

WALTER DE MONTREAL was buried in the church of St. Maria dell' Araceli. But the "evil that he did lived after him!" Although the vulgar had, until his apprehension, murmured against Rienzi for allowing so notorious a freebooter to be at large, he was scarcely dead ere they compassionated the object of their terror. With that singular species of piety which Montreal had always cultivated, as if a decorous and natural part of the character of a warrior, no sooner was his sentence fixed, than he had surrendered himself to the devout preparation for death. With the Augustine Friar he consumed the brief remainder of the night in prayer and confession, comforted his brothers, and passed to the scaffold with the step of a hero and the self-acquittal of a martyr. In the wonderful delusions of the human heart, far from feeling remorse at a life of professional rapine and slaughter, almost the last words of the brave warrior were in proud commendation of his own deeds. "Be valiant like me," he said to his brothers, "and remember that ye are now the heirs to the Humbler of Apulia, Tuscany, and La Marca."¹

This confidence in himself continued at the scaffold. "I die," he said, addressing the Romans—"I die contented, since my bones shall rest in the Holy City of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the Soldier of Christ shall have the burial-place of the Apostles. But I die unjustly. My wealth is my crime—the poverty of your state my accuser. Senator of Rome, thou mayst envy my last hour—men like Walter de Montreal perish not unavenged." So saying, he turned to the east, murmured a brief prayer, knelt down deliberately, and said as to himself, "Rome guard my ashes!—Earth my memory!—Fate my revenge!—and, now,

¹ "Pregovi che vi amiate e siate valorosi al mondo, come fui io, che mi feci fare obbedienza a la Puglia, Toscana, e a La Marca."—*Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. cap. 22.

"I pray you love one another, and be valorous as was I, who made Apulia, Tuscany, and La Marca owe obedience to me."—*Life of Cola di Rienzi*.

Heaven receive my soul!—Strike!” At the first blow the head was severed from the body.

His treason but imperfectly known, the fear of him forgotten, all that remained of the recollection of Walter de Montreal¹ in Rome, was admiration for his heroism, and compassion for his end. The fate of Pandulfo di Guido, which followed some days afterwards, excited a yet deeper, though more quiet, sentiment against the Senator. “He was once Rienzi’s friend!” said one man; “He was an honest, upright citizen!” muttered another; “He was an advocate of the people!” growled Cecco del Vecchio. But the Senator had wound himself up to a resolve to be inflexibly just, and to regard every peril to Rome as became a Roman. Rienzi remembered that he had never confided but he had been betrayed; he had never forgiven but to sharpen enmity. He was amidst a ferocious people, uncertain friends, wily enemies; and misplaced mercy would be but a premium to conspiracy. Yet the struggle he underwent was visible in the hysterical emotions he betrayed. He now wept bitterly, now laughed wildly. “Can I never again have the luxury to forgive?” said he. The coarse spectators of that passion deemed it,—some imbecility, some hypocrisy. But the execution produced the momentary effect intended. All sedition ceased, terror crept throughout the city, order and peace rose to the surface; but beneath, in the strong expression of a contemporaneous writer, “*Lo mormorito quetamente suonava.*”²

On examining dispassionately the conduct of Rienzi at this awful period of his life, it is scarcely possible to condemn it of a single error in point of policy. Cured of his faults, he exhibited no unnecessary ostentation—he indulged in no exhibitions of intoxicated pride—that gorgeous imagination rather than vanity, which had led the Tribune into spectacle and pomp, was now lulled to rest, by the sober memory of grave vicissitudes, and the stern calmness of a maturer intellect.

¹ The military renown and bold exploits of Montreal are acknowledged by all the Italian authorities. One of them declares that since the time of Cæsar, Italy had never known so great a Captain. The biographer of Rienzi, forgetting all the offences of the splendid and knightly robber, seems to feel only commiseration for his fate. He informs us, moreover, that at Tivoli one of his servants (perhaps our friend, Rodolf of Saxony), hearing his death, died of grief the following day.

² “The murmur quietly sounded.”

Frugal, provident, watchful, self-collected, "never was seen," observes no partial witness, "so extraordinary a man."¹ "In him was concentrated every thought for every want of Rome." Indefatigably occupied, he inspected, ordained, regulated all things; in the city, in the army, for peace or for war. But he was feebly supported, and those he employed were lukewarm and lethargic. Still his arms prospered. Place after place, fortress after fortress, yielded to the Lieutenant of the Senator: and the cession of Palestrina itself was hourly expected. His art and address were always strikingly exhibited in difficult situations, and the reader cannot fail to have noticed how conspicuously they were displayed in delivering himself from the iron tutelage of his foreign mercenaries. Montreal executed, his brothers imprisoned (though their lives were spared), a fear that induced respect was stricken into the breasts of those bandit soldiers. Removed from Rome, and under Annibaldi, engaged against the Barons, constant action and constant success, withheld those necessary fiends from falling on their master; while Rienzi, willing to yield to the natural antipathy of the Romans, thus kept the Northmen from all contact with the city; and, as he boasted, was the only chief in Italy who reigned in his palace guarded only by his citizens.

Despite his perilous situation—despite his suspicions and his fears, no wanton cruelty stained his stern justice—Montreal and Pandolfo di Guido were the only state victims he demanded. If, according to the dark Machiavelism of Italian wisdom, the death of those enemies was impolitic, it was not in the act, but the mode of doing it. A prince of Bologna, or of Milan would have avoided the sympathy excited by the scaffold, and the drug or the dagger would have been the safer substitute for the axe. But with all his faults, real and imputed, no single act of that foul and murderous policy, which made the science of the more fortunate princes of Italy, ever advanced the ambition or promoted the security of the Last of the Roman Tribunes. Whatever his errors, he lived and died as became a man, who dreamed the vain but glorious dream, that in a corrupt and dastard popalace he could revive the genius of the old Republic.

¹ *Vita di Cola di Rienzi*, lib. ii. c. 23.

Of all who attended on the Senator, the most assiduous and the most honoured was still Angelo Villani. Promoted to a high civil station, Rienzi felt it as a return of youth to find one person entitled to his gratitude;—he loved and confided in the youth as a son. Villani was never absent from his side, except in intercourse with the various popular leaders in the various quarters of the city; and in this intercourse his zeal was indefatigable—it seemed even to prey upon his health; and Rienzi chid him fondly, whenever, starting from his own reveries, he beheld the abstracted eye and the livid paleness which had succeeded the sparkle and bloom of youth.

Such chiding the young man answered only by the same unvarying words,

“Senator, I have a great trust to fulfil;”—and at these words he smiled.

One day Villani, while with the senator, said rather abruptly,

“Do you remember, my lord, that before Viterbo I acquitted myself so in arms, that even the Cardinal d’Albornoz was pleased to notice me?”

“I remember your valour well, Angelo; but why the question?”

“My Lord, Bellini, the Captain of the Guard of the Capitol, is dangerously ill.”

“I know it.”

“Whom can my lord trust at the post?”

“Why, the Lieutenant.”

“What!—a soldier that has served under the Orsini!”

“True. Well! there is Tommaso Filangieri.”

“An excellent man; but is he not kin by blood to Pandolfo di Guido?”

“Ay—is he so? It must be thought of. Hast *thou* any friend to name?” said the Senator, smiling. “Methinks thy cavils point that way.”

“My lord,” replied Villani, colouring; “I am too young, perhaps; but the post is one that demands fidelity more than it does years. Shall I own it?—My tastes are rather to serve thee with my sword than with my pen.”

“Wilt thou, indeed, accept the office? It is of less dignity

and emolument than the one you hold ; and you are full young to lead these stubborn spirits."

"Senator, I led taller men than they are to the assault at Viterbo. But, be it as seems best to your superior wisdom. Whatever you do, I pray you to be cautious. If you select a traitor to the command of the Capitol Guard!—I tremble at the thought!"

"By my faith, thou dost turn pale at it, dear boy ; thy affection is a sweet drop in a bitter draught. Whom can I choose better than thee?—thou shalt have the post, at least during Bellini's illness. I will attend to it to-day. The business, too, will less fatigue thy young mind than that which now employs thee. Thou art over-laboured in our cause."

"Senator, I can but repeat my usual answer—I have a great trust to fulfil!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE TAX.

THESE formidable conspiracies quelled, the Barons nearly subdued, and three parts of the Papal territory reunited to Rome, Rienzi now deemed he might safely execute one of his favourite projects for the preservation of the liberties of his native city ; and this was to raise and organise in each quarter of Rome a Roman Legion. Armed in the defence of their own institutions, he thus trusted to establish amongst her own citizens the only soldiery requisite for Rome.

But so base were the tools with which this great man was condemned to work out his noble schemes, that none could be found to serve their own country without a pay equal to that demanded by foreign hirelings. With the insolence so peculiar to a race that has once been great, each Roman said, "Am I not better than a German?—Pay me, then, accordingly."

The Senator smothered his disgust—he had learned at last to know that the age of the Catos was no more. From a daring enthusiast, experience had converted him into a practical statesman. The Legions were necessary to Rome—they were

formed—gallant their appearance and faultless their caparisons. How were they to be paid? There was but one means to maintain Rome—Rome must be taxed. A gabelle was put upon wine and salt.

The proclamation ran thus :—

“Romans! raised to the rank of your Senator, my whole thought has been for your liberties and welfare ; already Treason defeated in the City, our banners triumphant without, attest the favour with which the Deity regards men who seek to unite liberty with law. Let us set an example to Italy and the World! Let us prove that the Roman sword can guard the Roman Forum! In each Rione of the City is provided a Legion of the Citizens, collected from the traders and artisans of the town; they allege that they cannot leave their callings without remuneration. Your Senator calls upon you willingly to assist in your own defence. He has given you liberty; he has restored to you peace : your oppressors are scattered over the earth. He asks you now to preserve the treasures you have gained. To be free, you must sacrifice something ; for freedom, what sacrifice too great? Confident of your support, I at length, for the first time, exert the right entrusted to me by office—and for Rome’s salvation I tax the Romans!”

Then followed the announcement of the gabelle.

The proclamation was set up in the public thoroughfares. Round one of the placards a crowd assembled. Their gestures were vehement and unguarded—their eyes sparkled—they conversed low, but eagerly.

“He dares to tax us, then! Why, the Barons or the Pope could not do more than that!”

“Shame! shame!” cried a gaunt female; “we who were his friends! How are our little ones to get bread?”

“He should have seized the Pope’s money!” quoth an honest wine-vendor.

“Ah! Pandulfo di Guido would have maintained an army at his own cost. He was a rich man. What insolence in the inn-keeper’s son to be a Senator!”

“We are not Romans if we suffer this!” said a deserter from Palestrina.

"Fellow-citizens!" exclaimed gruffly a tall man, who had hitherto been making a clerk read to him the particulars of the tax imposed, and whose heavy brain at length understood that wine was to be made dearer—"fellow-citizens, we must have a new revolution! This is indeed gratitude! What have we benefited by restoring this man! Are we always to be ground to the dust? To pay—pay—pay! Is that all we are fit for?"

"Hark to Cecco del Vecchio!"

"No, no; not now," growled the smith. "To-night the artificers have a special meeting. We'll see—we'll see!"

A young man, muffled in a cloak, who had not been before observed touched the smith.

"Whoever storms the Capitol the day after to-morrow at the dawn," he whispered, "shall find the guards absent!"

He was gone before the smith could look round.

The same night Rienzi, retiring to rest, said to Angelo Villani—"A bold but necessary measure this of mine! how do the people take it?"

"They murmur a little, but seem to recognise the necessity. Cecco del Vecchio *was* the loudest grumbler, but is now the loudest approver."

"The man is rough; he once deserted me;—but then that fatal excommunication! He and the Romans learned a bitter lesson in that desertion, and experience has, I trust, taught them to be honest. Well, if this tax be raised quietly, in two years Rome will be again the Queen of Italy;—her army manned—her Republic formed; and then—then——"

"Then what, Senator?"

"Why, then, my Angelo, Cola di Rienzi may die in peace! There is a want which a profound experience of power and pomp brings at last to us—a want gnawing as that of hunger, wearing as that of sleep!—*my Angelo, it is the want to die!*"

"My lord, I would give this right hand," cried Villani earnestly, "to hear you say you were attached to life!"

"You are a good youth, Angelo!" said Rienzi, as he passed to Nina's chamber; and in her smile and wistful tenderness, forgot for a while—that he was a great man!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE THRESHOLD OF THE EVENT.

THE next morning the Senator of Rome held high Court in the Capitol. From Florence, from Padua, from Pisa, even from Milan (the dominion of the Visconti), from Genoa, from Naples, —came ambassadors to welcome his return, or to thank him for having freed Italy from the freebooter De Montreal. Venice alone, who held in her pay the Grand Company, stood aloof. Never had Rienzi seemed more prosperous and more powerful, and never had he exhibited a more easy and cheerful majesty of demeanour.

Scarce was the audience over, when a messenger arrived from Palestrina. The town had surrendered, the Colonna had departed, and the standard of the Senator waved from the walls of the last hold of the rebellious Barons. Rome might now at length consider herself free, and not a foe seemed left to menace the repose of Rienzi.

The Court dissolved. The Senator, elated and joyous, repaired towards his private apartments, previous to the banquet given to the ambassadors. Villani met him with his wonted sombre aspect.

"No sadness to-day, my Angelo," said the Senator, gaily; "Palestrina is ours!"

"I am glad to hear such news, and to see my lord of so fair a mien," answered Angelo. "Does he not now desire life?"

"Till Roman virtue revives, perhaps—yes! But thus are we fools of fortune; to-day glad—to-morrow dejected!"

"To-morrow," repeated Villani, mechanically: "ay—to-morrow perhaps dejected."

"Thou playest with my words, boy," said Rienzi, half angrily, as he turned away.

But Villani heeded not the displeasure of his lord.

The banquet was thronged and brilliant; and Rienzi that day, without an effort, played the courteous host.

Milanese, Paduan, Pisan, Neapolitan, vied with each other in

attracting the smiles of the potent Senator. Prodigal were their compliments—lavish their promises of support. No monarch in Italy seemed more securely throned.

The banquet was over (as usual on state occasions) at an early hour; and Rienzi, somewhat heated with wine, strolled forth alone from the Capitol. Bending his solitary steps towards the Palatine, he saw the pale and veil-like mists that succeed the sunset, gather over the wild grass which waves above the Palace of the Cæsars. On a mound of ruins (column and arch overthrown) he stood, with folded arms, musing and intent. In the distance lay the melancholy tombs of the Campagna, and the circling hills, crested with the purple hues soon to melt beneath the starlight. Not a breeze stirred the dark cypress and unwavering pine. There was something awful in the stillness of the skies, hushing the desolate grandeur of the earth below. Many and mingled were the thoughts that swept over Rienzi's breast: memory was busy at his heart. How often, in his youth, had he trodden the same spot!—what visions had he nursed! what hopes conceived! In the turbulence of his later life, Memory had long slept; but at that hour, she re-asserted her shadowy reign with a despotism that seemed prophetic. He was wandering—a boy, with his young brother, hand in hand, by the river side at eve: anon he saw a pale face and a gory side, and once more uttered his imprecations of revenge! His first successes, his virgin triumphs, his secret love, his fame, his power, his reverses, the hermitage of Maiella, the dungeon of Avignon, the triumphal return to Rome,—all swept across his breast with a distinctness as if he were living those scenes again!—and *now*!—he shrunk from the *present*, and descended the hill. The moon, already risen, shed her light over the Forum, as he passed through its mingled ruins. By the Temple of Jupiter, two figures suddenly emerged; the moonlight fell upon their faces, and Rienzi recognized Cecco del Vecchio and Angelo Villani. They saw him not; but, eagerly conversing, disappeared by the Arch of Trajan.

“Villani! ever active in my service!” thought the Senator; “methinks this morning I spoke to him harshly—it was churlish in me!”

He re-entered the place of the Capitol—he stood by the staircase of the Lion; there was a red stain upon the pavement, unobliterated since Montreal's execution, and the Senator drew himself aside with an inward shudder. Was it the ghastly and spectral light of the moon, or did the face of that old Egyptian monster wear an aspect that was as of life? The stony eyeballs seemed bent upon him with a malignant scowl; and as he passed on, and looked behind, they appeared almost preternaturally to follow his steps. A chill, he knew not why, sunk into his heart. He hastened to regain his palace. The sentinels made way for him.

"Senator," said one of them, doubtingly, "Messere Angelo Villani is our new captain—we are to obey his orders?"

"Assuredly," returned the Senator, passing on. The man lingered uneasily, as if he would have spoken, but Rienzi observed it not. Seeking his chamber, he found Nina and Irene waiting for him. His heart yearned to his wife. Care and toil had of late driven her from his thoughts, and he felt it remorsefully, as he gazed upon her noble face, softened by the solicitude of untiring and anxious love.

"Sweetest," said he, winding his arms around her tenderly; "thy lips never chide me, but thine eyes sometimes do! We have been apart too long. Brighter days dawn upon us, when I shall have leisure to thank thee for all thy care. And you, my fair sister, you smile on me!—ah, you have heard that your lover, ere this, is released by the cession of Palestrina, and to-morrow's sun will see him at your feet. Despite all the cares of the day, I remembered thee, my Irene, and sent a messenger to bring back the blush to that pale cheek. Come, come, we shall be happy again!" And with that domestic fondness common to him, when harsher thoughts permitted, he sate himself beside the two persons dearest to his hearth and heart.

"So happy—if we could have many hours like this!" murmured Nina, sinking on his breast. "Yet sometimes I wish——"

"And I too," interrupted Rienzi; "for I read thy woman's thought—I too sometimes wish that fate had placed us in the lowlier valleys of life! But it may come yet! Irene wedded to

Adrian—Rome married to Liberty—and then, Nina, methinks you and I would find some quiet hermitage, and talk over old gauds and triumphs, as of a summer's dream. Beautiful, kiss me! Couldst thou resign these pomps?"

"For a desert with *thee*, Cola!"

"Let me reflect," resumed Rienzi; "is not to-day the seventh of October? Yes! on the seventh, be it noted, my foes yielded to my power! Seven! my fated number, whether ominous of good or evil! Seven months did I reign as Tribune—seven¹ years was I absent as an exile; to-morrow, that sees me without an enemy, completes my seventh week of return!"

"And seven was the number of the crowns the Roman Convents and the Roman Council awarded thee, after the ceremony which gave thee the knighthood of the *Santo Spirito*!"² said Nina, adding, with woman's tender wit, "the brightest association of all!"

"Follies seem these thoughts to others, and to philosophy, in truth, they are so," said Rienzi; "but all my life long, omen and type and shadow have linked themselves to action and event: and the atmosphere of other men hath not been mine. Life itself a riddle, why should riddles amaze us? *The Future*!—what mystery in the very word! Had we lived all *through* the Past, since Time was, our profoundest experience of a thousand ages could not give us a guess of the events that wait the very moment we are about to enter! Thus deserted by Reason, what wonder that we recur to the Imagination, on which, by dream and symbol, God sometimes paints the likeness of things to come? Who can endure to leave the Future all unguessed, and sit tamely down to groan under the fardel of the Present? No, no! that which the foolish-wise call Fanaticism belongs to the same part of us as Hope. Each but carries us onward—from a barren strand to a glorious, if unbounded sea.

¹ There was the lapse of one year between the release of Rienzi from Avignon, and his triumphal return to Rome: a year chiefly spent in the campaign of Albarnoz.

² This superstition had an excuse in strange historical coincidences; and the number seven was indeed to Rienzi what the 3rd of September was to Cromwell. The ceremony of the seven crowns which he received after his knighthood, on the nature of which ridiculous ignorance has been shown by many recent writers, was, in fact, principally a religious and typical donation (symbolical of the gifts of the Holy Spirit), conferred by the heads of convents—and that part of the ceremony which was political, was republican, not regal.

Each is the yearning for the GREAT BEYOND, which attests our immortality. Each has its visions and chimeras—some false, but *some* true! Verily, a man who becomes great is often but made so by a kind of sorcery in his own soul—a Pythia which prophesies that he *shall* be great—and so renders the life one effort to fulfil the warning! Is this folly?—it were so, if all things stopped at the grave! But perhaps the very sharpening, and exercising, and elevating the faculties here—though but for a bootless end *on* earth—may be designed to fit the sôul, thus quickened and ennobled, to some high destiny *beyond* the earth! Who can tell? not I!—Let us pray.”

While the Senator was thus employed, Rome in her various quarters presented less holy and quiet scenes.

In the fortress of the Orsini, lights flitted to and fro, through the gratings of the great court. Angelo Villani might be seen stealing from the postern-gate. Another hour, and the moon was high in heaven; toward the ruins of the Colosseum, men, whose dress bespoke them of the lowest rank, were seen creeping from the lanes and alleys, two by two; from these ruins glided again the form of the son of Montreal. Later yet—the moon is sinking—a grey light breaking in the east—and the gates of Rome, by St. John of Lateran, are open! Villani is conversing with the sentries! The moon has set—the mountains are dim with a mournful and chilling haze—Villani is before the palace of the Capitol—the *only* soldier there! Where are the Roman legions that were to guard alike the freedom and the deliverer of Rome?

CHAPTER THE LAST.

THE CLOSE OF THE CHASE.

IT was the morning of the 8th of October, 1354. Rienzi, who rose betimes, stirred restlessly in his bed. “It is yet early,” he said to Nina, whose soft arm was round his neck; “none of my people seem to be astir. Howbeit, *my* day begins before *theirs*.”

"Rest yet, my Cola ; you want sleep."

"No ; I feel feverish, and this old pain in the side torments me. I have letters to write."

"Let me be your secretary, dearest," said Nina.

Rienzi smiled affectionately as he rose ; he repaired to his closet adjoining his sleeping apartment, and used the bath, as was his wont. Then dressing himself, he returned to Nina, who, already loosely robed, sate by the writing-table, ready for her office of love.

"How still are all things!" said Rienzi. "What a cool and delicious prelude, in these early hours, to the toilsome day."

Leaning over his wife, he then dictated different letters, interrupting the task at times by such observations as crossed his mind.

"So, now to Annibaldi ! By the way, young Adrian should join us to-day ; how I rejoice for Irene's sake !"

"Dear sister—yes ! she loves,—if any, Cola, can so love,—as we do."

"Well, but to your task, my fair scribe. Ha ! what noise is that ? I hear an armed step—the stairs creak—some one shouts my name."

Rienzi flew to his sword ! the door was thrown rudely open, and a figure in complete armour appeared within the chamber.

"How ! what means this ?" said Rienzi, standing before Nina, with his drawn sword.

The intruder lifted his visor—it was Adrian Colonna.

"Fly, Rienzi !—hasten, Signora ! Thank Heaven, I can save ye yet ! Myself and train released by the capture of Palestrina, the pain of my wound detained me last night at Tivoli. The town was filled with armed men—not *thine*, Senator. I heard rumours that alarmed me. I resolved to proceed onward—I reached Rome, the gates of the city are wide open !"

"How !"

"Your guard gone. Presently I came upon a band of the retainers of the Savelli. My insignia, as a Colonna, misled them. I learned that this very hour some of your enemies are within the city, the rest are on their march—the people themselves arm against you. In the obscurer streets I passed

through, the mob were already forming. They took me for thy foe, and shouted. I came hither—thy sentries have vanished. The private door below is unbarred and open. Not a soul seems left in thy palace. Haste—fly—save thyself!—Where is Irene?”

“The Capitol deserted!—impossible!” cried Rienzi. He strode across the chambers to the ante-room, where his night-guard usually waited—it was empty! He passed hastily to Villani’s room—it was untenanted! He would have passed further, but the doors were secured without. It was evident that all egress had been cut off, save by the private door below, and *that* had been left open to admit his murderers!

He returned to his room—Nina had already gone to rouse and prepare Irene, whose chamber was on the other side, within one of their own.

“Quick, Senator!” said Adrian. “Methinks there is yet time. We must make across to the Tiber. I have stationed my faithful squires and Northmen there. A boat waits us.”

“Hark!” interrupted Rienzi, whose senses had of late been preternaturally quickened. “I hear a distant shout—a familiar shout, ‘Viva ’l Popolo!’ Why, so say I! These must be friends.”

“Deceive not thyself; thou hast scarce a friend at Rome.”

“Hist!” said Rienzi, in a whisper; “save Nina—save Irene. I cannot accompany thee.”

“Art thou mad?”

“No! but fearless. Besides, did I accompany, I might but destroy you all. Were I found with you, you would be massacred with me. Without me ye are safe. Yes, even the Senator’s wife and sister have provoked no revenge. Save them, noble Colonna! Cola di Rienzi puts his trust in God alone!”

By this time Nina had returned; Irene with her. Afar was heard the tramp—steady—slow—gathering—of the fatal multitude.

“Now, Cola,” said Nina, with a bold and cheerful air, and she took her husband’s arm, while Adrian had already found his charge in Irene.

"Yes, *now*, Nina!" said Rienzi; "at length we part! If this is my last hour—in my last hour I pray God to bless and shield thee! for verily, thou hast been my exceeding solace—provident as a parent, tender as a child, the smile of my hearth, the—the——"

Rienzi was almost unmanned. Emotions, deep, conflicting, unspeakably fond and grateful, literally choked his speech.

"What!" cried Nina, clinging to his breast, and parting her hair from her eyes, as she sought his averted face. "Part!—never! This is my place—all Rome shall not tear me from it!"

Adrian, in despair, seized her hand, and attempted to drag her thence.

"Touch me not, sir!" said Nina, waving her arm with angry majesty, while her eyes sparkled as a lioness, whom the huntsmen would sever from her young. "I am the wife of Cola di Rienzi, the Great Senator of Rome, and by his side will I live and die!"

"Take her hence: quick!—quick! I hear the crowd advancing."

Irene tore herself from Adrian, and fell at the feet of Rienzi—she clasped his knees.

"Come, my brother, come! Why lose these precious moments? Rome forbids you to cast away a life in which her very self is bound up."

"Right, Irene; Rome is bound up with me, and we will rise or fall together!—no more!"

"You destroy us all!" said Adrian, with generous and impatient warmth. "A few minutes more and we are lost. Rash man! it is not to fall by an infuriate mob that you have been preserved from so many dangers."

"I believe it," said the Senator, as his tall form seemed to dilate as with the greatness of his own soul. "I shall triumph yet! Never shall mine enemies—never shall posterity say that a *second* time Rienzi abandoned Rome! Hark! 'Viva 'l Popolo!' still the cry of 'THE PEOPLE.' That cry scares none but tyrants! I shall triumph and survive!"

"And I with thee!" said Nina, firmly. Rienzi paused a moment, gazed on his wife, passionately clasped her to his

heart, kissed her again and again, and then said, "Nina, I command thee,—Go!"

"Never!"

He paused. Irene's face, drowned in tears, met his eyes.

"We will all perish with you," said his sister; "you only, Adrian, *you* leave us!"

"Be it so," said the Knight, sadly; "we will *all* remain," and he desisted at once from further effort.

There was a dead but short pause, broken but by a convulsive sob from Irene. The tramp of the raging thousands sounded fearfully distinct. Rienzi seemed lost in thought—then lifting his head, he said, calmly, "Ye have triumphed—I join ye—I but collect these papers, and follow you. Quick, Adrian—save them!" and he pointed meaningly to Nina.

Waiting no other hint, the young Colonna seized Nina in his strong grasp—with his left hand he supported Irene, who with terror and excitement was almost insensible. Rienzi relieved him of the lighter load—he took his sister in his arms, and descended the winding stairs. Nina remained passive—she heard her husband's step behind, it was enough for her—she but turned once to thank him with her eyes. A tall Northman, clad in armour, stood at the open door. Rienzi placed Irene, now perfectly lifeless, in the soldier's arms, and kissed her pale cheek in silence.

"Quick, my lord," said the Northman, "on all sides they come!" So saying, he bounded down the descent with his burthen. Adrian followed with Nina; the Senator paused one moment, turned back, and was in his room ere Adrian was aware that he had vanished.

Hastily he drew the coverlet from his bed, fastened it to the casement bars, and by its aid dropped (at a distance of several feet) into the balcony below. "I will not die like a rat," said he, "in the trap they have set for me! The whole crowd shall, at least, see and hear me."

This was the work of a moment.

Meanwhile, Nina had scarcely proceeded six paces, before she discovered that she was alone with Adrian.

"Ha! Cola!" she cried, "where is he? he has gone!"

"Take heart, lady, he has returned but for some secret papers he has forgotten. He will follow us anon."

"Let us wait, then."

"Lady," said Adrian, grinding his teeth, "hear you not the crowd?—on, on!" and he flew with a swifter step. Nina struggled in his grasp—Love gave her the strength of despair. With a wild laugh she broke from him. She flew back—the door was closed—but unbarred—her trembling hands lingered a moment round the spring. She opened it, drew the heavy bolt across the panels, and frustrated all attempt from Adrian to regain her. She was on the stairs—she was in the room. Rienzi was gone! She fled, shrieking his name, through the State Chambers—all was desolate. She found the doors opening on the various passages that admitted to the rooms below barred without. Breathless and gasping, she returned to the chamber. She hurried to the casement—she perceived the method by which he had descended below—her brave heart told her of his brave design:—she saw they were separated,—“But the same roof holds us,” she cried, joyously, “and our fate shall be the same!” With that thought she sank in mute patience on the floor.

Forming the generous resolve not to abandon the faithful and devoted pair without another effort, Adrian had followed Nina, but too late—the door was closed against his efforts. The crowd marched on—he heard their cry change on a sudden—it was no longer “LIVE THE PEOPLE!” but, “DEATH TO THE TRAITOR!” His attendant had already disappeared, and waking now only to the danger of Irene, the Colonna in bitter grief turned away, lightly sped down the descent, and hastened to the river side, where the boat and his band awaited him.

The balcony on which Rienzi had alighted was that from which he had been accustomed to address the people—it communicated with a vast hall used on solemn occasions for State festivals—and on either side were square projecting towers, whose grated casements looked into the balcony. One of these towers was devoted to the armoury, the other contained the prison of Brettone, the brother of Montreal. Beyond the latter tower was the general prison of the Capitol. For then the prison and the palace were in awful neighbourhood!

The windows of the Hall were yet open—and Rienzi passed into it from the balcony—the witness of the yesterday's banquet was still there—the wine, yet undried, crimsoned the floor, and goblets of gold and silver shone from the recesses. He proceeded at once to the armoury, and selected from the various suits that which he himself had worn when, nearly eight years ago, he had chased the Barons from the gates of Rome. He arrayed himself in the mail, leaving only his head uncovered; and then taking, in his right hand, from the wall, the great Gonfalon of Rome, returned once more to the hall. Not a man encountered him. In that vast building, save the prisoners, and the faithful Nina, whose presence he knew not of—the Senator was alone.

On they came, no longer in measured order, as stream after stream—from lane, from alley, from palace and from hovel—the raging sea received new additions. On they came—their passions excited by their numbers—women and men, children and malignant age—in all the awful array of aroused, released, unresisted physical strength and brutal wrath: “Death to the traitor—death to the tyrant—death to him who has taxed the people!” “*Mora l’traditore che ha fatta la gabella!—Mora!*” Such was the cry of the people—such the crime of the Senator! They broke over the low palisades of the Capitol—they filled with one sudden rush the vast space;—a moment before so desolate,—now swarming with human beings athirst for blood!

Suddenly came a dead silence, and on the balcony above stood Rienzi—his head was bared and the morning sun shone over the lordly brow, and the hair grown grey before its time, in the service of that maddening multitude. Pale and erect he stood—neither fear, nor anger, nor menace—but deep grief and high resolve—upon his features! A momentary shame—a momentary awe seized the crowd.

He pointed to the Gonfalon, wrought with the Republican motto and arms of Rome, and thus he began:—

“I too am a Roman and a Citizen! hear me!”

“Hear him not! hear him not! his false tongue can charm away our senses!” cried a voice louder than his own; and Rienzi recognised Cecco del Vecchio.

“Hear him not! down with the tyrant!” cried a more shrill

and youthful tone: and by the side of the artisan stood Angelo Villani.

"Hear him not! death to the death-giver!" cried a voice close at hand, and from the grating of the neighbouring prison glared near upon him, as the eye of a tiger, the vengeful gaze of the brother of Montreal.

Then from Earth to Heaven rose the roar—"Down with the tyrant—down with him who taxed the people!"

A shower of stones rattled on the mail of the Senator,—still he stirred not. No changing muscle betokened fear. His persuasion of his own wonderful powers of eloquence, if he could but be heard, inspired him yet with hope; he stood collected in his own indignant, but determined thoughts!—but the knowledge of that very eloquence was now his deadliest foe. The leaders of the multitude trembled lest he *should* be heard; "*and doubtless,*" says the contemporaneous biographer, "*had he but spoken he would have changed them all and the work been marred.*"

The soldiers of the Barons had already mixed themselves with the throng—more deadly weapons than stones aided the wrath of the multitude—darts and arrows darkened the air: and now a voice was heard shrieking, "Way for the torches!" And red in the sunlight the torches tossed and waved, and danced to and fro, above the heads of the crowd, as if the fiends were let loose amongst the mob! And what place in hell *hath* fiends like those a mad mob can furnish? Straw, and wood, and litter, were piled hastily round the great doors of the Capitol, and the smoke curled suddenly up, beating back the rush of the assailants.

Rienzi was no longer visible, an arrow had pierced his hand the right hand that supported the flag of Rome—the right hand that had given a constitution to the Republic. He retired from the storm into the desolate hall.

He sat down;—and tears, springing from no weak and woman source, but tears from the loftiest fountain of emotion—tears that befit a warrior when his own troops desert him—a patriot when his countrymen rush to their own doom—a father when his children rebel against his love,—tears such as these

forced themselves from his eyes and relieved, but *they changed* his heart!

"Enough, enough!" he said, presently rising and dashing the drops scornfully away; "I have risked, dared, toiled enough for this dastard and degenerate race. I will yet baffle their malice—I renounce the thought of which they are so little worthy!—Let Rome perish!—I feel, at last, that I am nobler than my country!—she deserves not so high a sacrifice!"

With that feeling, Death lost all the nobleness of aspect it had before presented to him; and he resolved, in very scorn of his ungrateful foes, in very defeat of their inhuman wrath, to make one effort for his life! He divested himself of his glittering arms; his address, his dexterity, his craft, returned to him. His active mind ran over the chances of disguise—of escape;—he left the hall—passed through the humbler rooms, devoted to the servitors and menials—found in one of them a coarse working garb—indued himself with it—placed upon his head some of the draperies and furniture of the palace, as if escaping with them; and said, with his old "*fantastico riso*"¹—"When all other friends desert me, I may well forsake myself!" With that he awaited his occasion.

Meanwhile the flames burnt fierce and fast; the outer door below was already consumed; from the apartment he had deserted the fire burst out in volleys of smoke—the wood crackled—the lead melted—with a crash fell the severed gate—the dreadful entrance was opened to all the multitude—the proud Capitol of the Cæsars was already tottering to its fall!—Now was the time!—he passed the flaming door—the smouldering threshold;—he passed the outer gates unscathed—he was in the middle of the crowd. "Plenty of pillage within," he said to the bystanders, in the Roman *patois*, his face concealed by his load—"Suso, suso a gliu traditore!"² The mob rushed past him—he went on—he gained the last stair descending into the open streets—he was at the last gate—liberty and life were before him.

A soldier (one of his own) seized him. "Pass not—whither goest thou?"

¹ "Fantastic smile or laugh."

² "Down, down with the traitor!"

"Beware, lest the Senator escape disguised!" cried a voice behind—it was Villani's. The concealing load was torn from his head—Rienzi stood revealed!

"I *am* the Senator!" he said in a loud voice. "Who dare touch the Representative of the People?"

The multitude were round him in an instant. Not led, but rather hurried and whirled along, the Senator was borne to the Place of the Lion. With the intense glare of the bursting flames, the grey image reflected a lurid light, and glowed—(that grim and solemn monument!)—as if itself of fire!

There arrived, the crowd gave way, terrified by the greatness of their victim. Silent he stood, and turned his face around; nor could the squalor of his garb, nor the terror of the hour, nor the proud grief of detection, abate the majesty of his mien, or reassure the courage of the thousands who gathered, gazing, round him. The whole Capitol wrapped in fire, lighted with ghastly pomp the immense multitude. Down the long vista of the streets extended the fiery light and the serried throng, till the crowd closed with the gleaming standards of the Colonna—the Orsini—the Savelli! Her true tyrants were marching into Rome! As the sound of their approaching horns and trumpets broke upon the burning air, the mob seemed to regain their courage. Rienzi prepared to speak; his first word was as the signal of his own death.

"Die, tyrant!" cried Cecco del Vecchio: and he plunged his dagger into the Senator's breast.

"Die, executioner of Montreal!" muttered Villani: "thus the trust is fulfilled!" and his was the second stroke. Then as he drew back, and saw the artisan in all the drunken fury of his brute passion, tossing up his cap, shouting aloud, and spurning the fallen lion,—the young man gazed upon him with a look of withering and bitter scorn, and said, while he sheathed his blade, and slowly turned to quit the crowd,

"Fool, miserable fool! *thou* and *these* at least had no *blood of kindred to avenge!*"

They heeded not his words—they saw him not depart; for as Rienzi, without a word, without a groan, fell to the earth,—as the roaring waves of the multitude closed over him,—a voice,

shrill, sharp, and wild, was heard above all the clamour. At the casement of the Palace (the casement of her bridal chamber), Nina stood!—through the flames that burst below and around, her face and outstretched arms alone visible! Ere yet the sound of that thrilling cry passed from the air, down with a mighty crash thundered that whole wing of the Capitol,—a blackened and smouldering mass.

At that hour, a solitary boat was gliding swiftly along the Tiber. Rome was at a distance, but the lurid glow of the conflagration cast its reflection upon the placid and glassy stream: fair beyond description was the landscape! soft beyond all art of painter and of poet, the sunlight quivering over the autumnal herbage, and hushing into tender calm the waves of the golden river!

Adrian's eyes were strained towards the towers of the Capitol, distinguished by the flames from the spires and domes around;—senseless, and clasped to his guardian breast, Irene was happily unconscious of the horrors of the time.

"They dare not—they dare not," said the brave Colonna, "touch a hair of that sacred head!—if Rienzi fall, the liberties of Rome fall for ever! As those towers that surmount the flames, the pride and monument of Rome, he shall rise above the dangers of the hour. Behold, still unscathed amidst the raging element, the Capitol itself is his emblem!"

Scarce had he spoken, when a vast volume of smoke obscured the fires afar off, a dull crash (deadened by the distance) travelled to his ear, and the next moment, the towers on which he gazed had vanished from the scene, and one intense and sullen glare seemed to settle over the atmosphere,—making all Rome itself the funeral pyre of **THE LAST OF THE ROMAN TRIBUNES!**

APPENDIX I.

SOLE REMARKS ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF RIENZI.

THE principal authority from which historians have taken their account of the life and times of Rienzi is a very curious biography, by some unknown contemporary ; and this, which is in the Roman *patois* of the time, has been rendered not quite unfamiliar to the French and English reader by the work of Père du Cerceau, called "Conjuration de Nicolas Gabrini, dit de Rienzi,"¹ which has at once pillaged and deformed the Roman biographer. The biography I refer to was published (and the errors of the former editions revised) by Muratori in his great collection ; and has lately been reprinted separately in an improved text, accompanied by notes of much discrimination and scholastic taste, and a comment upon that celebrated poem of Petrarch, "*Spirto Gentil*," which the majority of Italian critics have concurred in considering addressed to Rienzi, in spite of the ingenious arguments to the contrary by the Abbé de Sade.

This biography has been generally lauded for its rare impartiality. And the author does, indeed, praise and blame alike with a most singular appearance of stolid candour. The work, in truth, is one of those not uncommon proofs, of which Boswell's "Johnson" is the most striking, that a very valuable book may be written by a very silly man. The biographer of Rienzi appears more like the historian of Rienzi's clothes, so minute is he on all details of their colour and quality—so silent is he upon everything that could throw light upon the motives of their wearer. In fact, granting the writer every desire to be impartial, he is too foolish to be so. It requires some cleverness to judge accurately of a very clever man in very difficult circumstances ; and the worthy biographer is utterly incapable of giving us any clue to the actions of Rienzi—utterly unable to explain the conduct of the man by the circumstances of the time. The weakness of his vision causes him, therefore, often to squint. We must add to his want of wisdom a want of truth, which the Herodotus-like simplicity of his style frequently conceals. He describes things which had no witness as precisely and distinctly as those which he himself had seen. For instance, before the death of Rienzi, in those awful moments when the Senator was alone, unheard, unseen, he coolly informs us of each motion, and each thought of Rienzi's, with as much detail as if Rienzi had returned from the grave to assist his narration. These obvious inventions have been adopted by Gibbon and others with more good faith than the laws of evidence would warrant. Still, however, to a patient and cautious reader the biography may furnish a much better notion of Rienzi's character than we can glean from the historians who have borrowed from it piecemeal. Such a reader will discard all the writer's reasonings, will think little of his praise or blame, and regard only the facts he narrates, judging them true or doubtful, according as the writer had the opportunities of being himself the observer. Thus examining, the reader will find evidence sufficient of Rienzi's genius and Rienzi's failings. Carefully distinguishing between the period of

¹ See for a specimen of the singular blunders of the Frenchman's work, Appendix II.

his power as Tribune, and that of his power as Senator, he will find the Tribune vain, haughty, and fond of display ; but despite the reasonings of the biographer, he will not recognise those faults in the Senator. On the other hand he will notice the difference between youth and maturity—hope and experience ; he will notice in the Tribune vast ambition, great schemes, enterprising activity—which sober into less gorgeous and more quiet colours in the portrait of the Senator. He will find that in neither instance did Rienzi fall from his own faults—he will find that the vulgar moral of ambition, blasted by its own excesses, is not the true moral of the Roman's life ; he will find that, both in his abdication as Tribune, and his death as Senator, *Rienzi fell from the vices of the people*. The Tribune was a victim to ignorant cowardice—the Senator, a victim to ferocious avarice. It is this which modern historians have failed to represent. Gibbon records rightly, that the Count of Minorbino entered Rome with one hundred and fifty soldiers, and barricaded the quarter of the Colonna—that the bell of the Capitol sounded—that Rienzi addressed the people—that they were silent and inactive—and that Rienzi then abdicated the government. But for this he calls *Rienzi* “pusillanimous.” Is not that epithet to be applied to *the people* ? Rienzi invoked them to move against the robber—the people refused to obey. Rienzi wished to fight—the people refused to stir. It was not the cause of Rienzi alone which demanded their exertions—it was the cause of the people—theirs, not his, the shame, if one hundred and fifty foreign soldiers mastered Rome, overthrew their liberties, and restored their tyrants ! Whatever Rienzi's sins, whatever his unpopularity, *their* freedom, *their* laws, *their* republic, were at stake ; and these they surrendered to one hundred and fifty hirelings ! This is the fact that damns them ! But Rienzi was not unpopular when he addressed and conjured them : they found no fault with him. “The sighs and groans of the people,” says Sismondi, justly, “replied to his,”—they could weep, but they would not fight. This strange apathy the modern historians have not accounted for, yet the principal cause was obvious—Rienzi was *excommunicated* !¹ In stating the fact, these writers have seemed to think that excommunication in Rome, in the fourteenth century, produced no effect !—the effect it did produce I have endeavoured in these pages to convey.

The causes of the second fall and final murder of Rienzi are equally misstated by modern narrators. It was from no fault of his—no injustice, no cruelty, no extravagance—it was not from the execution of Montreal, nor that of Pandolfo di Guido—it was from a gabelle on wine and salt that he fell. To preserve Rome from the tyrants it

¹ And this curse I apprehend to have been the more effective in the instance of Rienzi, from a fact that it would be interesting and easy to establish : viz., that he owed his rise as much to religious as to civil causes. He aimed evidently to be a religious Reformer. All his devices, ceremonies, and watchwords, were of a religious character. The monks took part with his enterprise, and joined in the revolution. His letters are full of mystical fanaticism. His references to ancient heroes of Rome are always mingled with invocations to her Christian Saints. The Bible, at that time little read by the public civilians of Italy, is constantly in his hands, and his addresses studded with texts. His very garments were adorned with sacred and mysterious emblems. No doubt, the ceremony of his knighthood, which Gibbon ridicules as an act of mere vanity, was but another of his religious extravagances ; for he peculiarly dedicated his Knighthood to the service of the Santo Spirito ; and his bathing in the vase of Constantine was quite of a piece, not with the vanity of the Tribune, but with the extravagance of the Fanatic. In fact, they tried hard to prove him a heretic ; but he escaped a charge under the mild Innocent, which a century or two before, or a century or two afterwards, would have sufficed to have sent a dozen Rienzis to the stake. I have dwelt the more upon this point, because, if it be shown that religious causes operated with those of liberty, we throw a new light upon the whole of that most extraordinary revolution, and its suddenness is infinitely less striking. The deep impression Rienzi produced upon that populace was thus stamped with the spirit of the religious enthusiast more than that of the classical demagogue. And, as in the time of Cromwell, the desire for temporal liberty was warmed and coloured by the presence of a holier and more spiritual fervour :—“The Good Estate” (*Buono Stato*) of Rienzi reminds us a little of the Good Cause of General Cromwell.

was necessary to maintain an armed force; to pay the force a tax was necessary; the tax was imposed—and the multitude joined with the tyrants, and their cry was, “Perish the traitor *who has made the gabelle!*” This was their only charge—this the only crime that their passions and their fury could cite against him.

The faults of Rienzi are sufficiently visible, and I have not unsparingly shown them; but we must judge men, not according as they approach perfection, but according as their good or bad qualities preponderate—their talents or their weaknesses—the benefits they effected, the evil they wrought. For a man who rose to so great a power, Rienzi's faults were singularly few—*crimes* he committed none. He is almost the only man who ever rose from the rank of a citizen to a power equal to that of monarchs without a single act of violence or treachery. When *in* power, he was vain, ostentatious, and imprudent,—always an enthusiast—often a fanatic; but his very faults had greatness of soul, and his very fanaticism at once supported his enthusiastic daring, and proved his earnest honesty. It is evident that no heinous charge could be brought against him even by his enemies, for all the accusations to which he was subjected, when excommunicated, exiled, fallen, were for two offences which Petrarch rightly deemed the proofs of his virtue and his glory; first for declaring Rome to be free; secondly, for pretending that the Romans had a right of choice in the election of the Roman Emperor.¹ Stern, just, and inflexible, as he was when Tribune, his fault was never that of *wanton* cruelty. The accusation against him, made by the gentle Petrarch, indeed, was, that he was not determined enough—that he did not consummate the revolution by exterminating the patrician tyrants. When Senator, he was, without sufficient ground, accused of avarice in the otherwise just and necessary execution of Montreal.² It was natural enough that his enemies and the vulgar should suppose that he executed a creditor to get rid of a debt; but it was inexcusable in later, and wiser, and fairer writers to repeat so grave a calumny, without at least adding the obvious suggestion, that the avarice of Rienzi could have been much better gratified by sparing than by destroying the life of one of the richest subjects in Europe. Montreal, we may be quite sure, would have purchased his life at an immeasurably higher price than the paltry sum lent to Rienzi by his brothers. And this is not a probable hypothesis, but a certain fact, for we are expressly told that Montreal, “knowing the Tribune was in want of money, offered Rienzi, that if he would let him go, he, Montreal, would furnish him not only with twenty thousand florins (four times the amount of Rienzi's debt to him), but with as many soldiers and as much money as he pleased.” This offer Rienzi did not attend to. Would he have rejected it had avarice been his motive? And what culpable injustice, to mention the vague calumny without citing the practical contradiction! When Gibbon tells us, also, that “the *most* virtuous citizen of Rome, meaning Pandulfo, or Pandulficcio di Guido,³ was sacrificed to his jealousy, he a little exaggerates the expression bestowed upon Pandulfo, which is that of “*virtuoso assai* ;” and that expression, too, used by a man who styles the robber Montreal “*eccellente uomo—di quale fama suono per tutta la Italia di virtude*”⁴—(so good a moral critic was the writer!) but he also altogether waives all mention of the probabilities that are sufficiently apparent, of the scheming of Pandulfo to supplant Rienzi, and to obtain the “*Signoria del Popolo*.” Still, however, if the death of Pandulfo may be considered a blot on the memory of Rienzi, it does not appear that it was this which led to his own fate. The cry of the mob surrounding his palace was not, “Perish him who executed Pandulfo,” it was—

¹ The charge of heresy was dropped.

² Gibbon, in mentioning the execution of Montreal, omits to state that Montreal was more than suspected of conspiracy and treason to restore the Colonna. Matthew Villani records it as a common belief that such truly was the offence of the Provençal. The biographer of Rienzi gives additional evidence of the fact. Gibbon's knowledge of this time was superficial. As one instance of this, he strangely enough represents Montreal as the head of the *first* Free Company that desolated Italy: he took that error from the Père du Cerceau.

³ Matthew Villani speaks of him as a wise and good citizen, of great repute among the people—and this, it seems, he really was.

⁴ “An excellent man whose fame for valour resounded throughout all Italy.”

and this again and again must be carefully noted—it was nothing more nor less than “*Perish him who has made the gabelle!*”

Gibbon sneers at the military skill and courage of Rienzi. For this sneer there is no cause. His first attempts, his first rise, attested sufficiently his daring and brave spirit; in every danger he was present—never shrinking from a foe so long as he was supported by the people. He distinguished himself at Viterbo when in the camp of Alborno, in several feats of arms,¹ and his end was that of a hero. So much for his courage; as to his military skill, it would be excusable enough if Rienzi—the eloquent and gifted student, called from the closet and the rostrum to assume the command of an army—should have been deficient in the art of war; yet, somehow or other, upon the whole, his arms prospered. He defeated the chivalry of Rome at her gates; and if he did not, after his victory, march to Marino, for which his biographer² and Gibbon blame him, the reason is sufficiently clear—“*Volea pecunia per soldati*”—*he wanted money for the soldiers!* On his return as Senator, it must be remembered that he had to besiege Palestrina, which was considered even by the ancient Romans almost impregnable by position; but during the few weeks he was in power, Palestrina yielded—all his open enemies were defeated—the tyrants expelled—Rome free; and this without support from any party, Papal or Popular, or, as Gibbon well expresses it, “suspected by the people—abandoned by the prince.”

On regarding what Rienzi did, we must look to his means, to the difficulties that surrounded him, to the scantiness of his resources. We see a man without rank, wealth, or friends, raising himself to the head of a popular government in the metropolis of the Church—in the City of the Empire. We see him reject any title save that of a popular magistrate—establish at one stroke a free constitution—a new code of law. We see him first expel, then subdue, the fiercest aristocracy in Europe—conquer the most stubborn banditti, rule impartially the most turbulent people, embroiled by the violence, and sunk in the corruption of centuries. We see him restore trade—establish order—create civilization as by a miracle—receive from crowned heads homage and congratulation—outwit, conciliate, or awe, the wildest priesthood of the Papal Diplomacy—and raise his native city at once to sudden yet acknowledged eminence over every other state, its superior in arts, wealth, and civilization;—we ask what errors we are to weigh in the opposite balance, and we find an unnecessary ostentation, a fanatical extravagance, and a certain insolent sternness. But what are such offences—what the splendour of a banquet, or the ceremony of knighthood, or a few arrogant words, compared with the vices of almost every prince who was his contemporary? This is the way to judge character: we must compare men with men, and not with ideals of what men should be. We look to the amazing benefits Rienzi conferred upon his country. We ask his means, and see but his own abilities. His treasury becomes impoverished—his enemies revolt—the Church takes advantage of his weakness—he is excommunicated—the soldiers refuse to fight—the People refuse to assist—the Barons ravage the country—the ways are closed, the provisions are cut off from Rome.³ A handful of banditti enter the city—Rienzi proposes to resist them—the People desert—he abdicates. Rapine, Famine, Massacre, ensue—they who deserted, regret, repent—yet he is still unassisted, alone—now an exile, now a prisoner, his own genius saves him from every peril, and restores him to greatness. He returns, the Pope’s Legate refuses him arms—the People refuse him money. He re-establishes law and order, expels the tyrants, renounces his former faults⁴—is

¹ Vit. di Col. di Rienzi, lib. ii. cap. 14.

² In this the anonymous writer compares him gravely to Hannibal, who knew how to conquer, but not how to use his conquest.

³ Allora le strade furo chiuse, li massari de la terre non portavano grano, ogni die nasceva nuovo rumores.”—*Vit. di Col. Rienzi*, lib. i. cap. 37.

⁴ This, the second period of his power, has been represented by Gibbon and others as that of his principal faults, and he is evidently at this time no favourite with his contemporaneous biographer; but looking to what he *did*, we find amazing dexterity, prudence, and energy in the most difficult crisis, and *none of his earlier faults*. It is true, that he does not show the same brilliant extravagance which, I suspect, dazzled his contemporaries more than his sounder qualities; but we find that in a few weeks

prudent, wary, provident—reigns a few weeks—taxes the People, in support of the People, and is torn to pieces! One day of the rule that followed is sufficient to vindicate his reign and avenge his memory—and for centuries afterwards, whenever that wretched and degenerate populace dreamed of glory or sighed for justice, they recalled the bright vision of their own victim, and deplored the fate of Cola di Rienzi. That he was not a tyrant is clear in this—when he was dead, he was bitterly regretted. The People never regret a tyrant! From the unpopularity that springs from other faults there is often a re-action; but there is no re-action in the populace towards their betrayer or oppressor. A thousand biographies cannot decide upon the faults or merits of a rule, like the one fact, whether he is beloved or hated ten years after he is dead. But if the ruler has been murdered by the People, and is then regretted by them, their repentance is his acquittal.

I have said that the moral of the Tribune's life, and of this fiction, is not the stale and unprofitable moral that warns the ambition of an individual:—more vast, more solemn, and more useful, it addresses itself to nations. If I judge not erringly, it proclaims that, to be great and free, a People must trust not to individuals but themselves—that there is no sudden leap from servitude to liberty—that it is to institutions, not to men, that they must look for reforms that last beyond the hour—that their own passions are the real despots they should subdue, their own reason the true regenerator of abuses. With a calm and a noble people, the individual ambition of a citizen can never effect evil:—to be impatient of chains is not to be worthy of freedom—to murder a magistrate is not to ameliorate the laws.¹ The People write their own condemnation whenever they use characters of blood; and theirs alone the madness and the crime, if they crown a tyrant or butcher a victim.

he had conquered all his powerful enemies—that his eloquence was as great as ever—his promptitude greater—his diligence indefatigable—his foresight unslumbering. "He alone," says the biographer, "carried on the affairs of Rome, but his officials were slothful and cold." This too, tortured by a painful disease—already—though yet young—broken and infirm. The only charges against him, as Senator, were the deaths of Montreal and Pandolfo di Guido, the imposition of the gabelle, and the renunciation of his former habits of rigid abstinence, for indulgence in wine and feasting. Of the first charges, the reader has already been enabled to form a judgment. To the last, alas! the reader must extend indulgence, and for it he may find excuse. We must compassionate even more than condemn the man to whom excitement has become nature, and who resorts to the physical stimulus or the momentary Lethe, when the mental exhilarations of hope, youth, and glory, begin to desert him. His alleged intemperance, however, which the Romans (a peculiarly sober people) might perhaps exaggerate, and for which he gave the excuse of a thirst produced by disease contracted in the dungeon of Avignon—evidently and confessedly did not in the least diminish his attention to business, which, according to his biographer, was at that time greater than ever.

¹ Rienzi was murdered because the Romans had been in the habit of murdering whenever they were displeased. They had, very shortly before, stoned one magistrate, and torn to pieces another. By the same causes and the same career a People may be made to resemble the bravo whose hand wanders to his knife at the smallest affront, and if to-day he poignards the enemy who assaults him, to-morrow he strikes the friend who would restrain.

APPENDIX II.

A WORD UPON THE WORK BY PÈRE DU CERCEAU AND PÈRE BRUMOY ENTITLED "CONJURATION DE NICOLAS GABRINI, DIT DE RIENZI, TYRAN DE ROME."

SHORTLY after the Romance of "Rienzi" first appeared, a translation of the biography compiled by Cerceau and Brumoy was published by Mr. Whittaker. The translator, in a short and courteous advertisement, observes, "That it has always been considered as a work of authority; and even Gibbon appears to have relied on it without further research;"¹ that, as a record of facts, therefore, the work will, it is presumed, be acceptable to the public." The translator has fulfilled his duty with accuracy, elegance, and spirit,—and he must forgive me, if, in justice to history and Rienzi, I point out a very few from amongst a great many reasons, why the joint labour of the two worthy Jesuits cannot be considered either a work of authority, or a record of facts. The translator observes in his preface, "that the general outline (of Du Cerceau's work) was *probably* furnished by an Italian life written by a contemporary of Rienzi." The fact, however, is, that Du Cerceau's book is little more than a wretched paraphrase of that very Italian life mentioned by the translator,—full of blunders, from ignorance of the peculiar and antiquated dialect in which the original is written, and of assumptions by the Jesuit himself, which rest upon no authority whatever. I will first show, in support of this assertion, what the Italians themselves think of the work of Fathers Brumoy and Du Cerceau. The Signor Zefirino Re, who has proved himself singularly and minutely acquainted with the history of that time, and whose notes to the "Life of Rienzi" are characterised by acknowledged acuteness and research, thus describes the manner in which the two Jesuits compounded this valuable "record of facts."

"Father Du Cerceau for his work made use of a French translation of the life by the Italian contemporary printed in Bracciano, 1624, executed by Father Sanadon, another Jesuit, from whom he received the MS. This proves that Du Cerceau knew little of our 'volgar lingua' of the fourteenth century. But the errors into which he has run show, that even that little was unknown to his guide, and still less to Father Brumoy (however learned and reputed the latter might be in *French* literature) who, after the death of Du Cerceau, supplied the deficiencies in the first pages of the author's MS., which were, I know not how, lost; and in this part are found the more striking errors in the work, which shall be noticed in the proper place; in the meantime, one specimen will suffice. In the third chapter, book i., Cola, addressing the Romans, says, 'Che lo giubileo, si approssima, che se la gente, la quale verrà al giubileo, li trova sproveduti di annona, le pietre (per metatesi sta scritto le preite) ne porteranno da Roma per rabbia di fame, e le pietre non basteranno a tanta moltitudine. Il francese traduce: Le jubilé approche, et vous n'avez ni provisions ni vivres; les étrangers . . . trouveront votre ville dénué de tout. Ne comptez point sur les secours des gens d'Eglise; ils sortiront de la ville, s'ils n'y trouvent de quoi

¹ Here, however, he does injustice to Gibbon.

subsister : et d'ailleurs pourroient-ils suffire à la multitude innombrable que se trouvera dans vos murs ?”¹ “Buon Dio !” exclaims the learned Zefrino, “Buon D’o ! le pietre prese per tanta gente di chiesa !”²

Another blunder little less extraordinary occurs in Chapter vi., in which the ordinances of Rienzi’s Buono Stato are recited.

It is set forth as the third ordinance :—“Che nulla casa di Roma sia data per terra per alcuna cagione, ma vada in commune ;” which simply means, that the houses of delinquents should in no instance be razed, but added to the community or confiscated. This law being intended partly to meet the barbarous violences with which the excesses and quarrels of the Barons had half dismantled Rome, and principally to repeal some old penal laws by which the houses of a certain class of offenders might be destroyed ; but the French translator construes it, “*Que nulle maison de Rome ne seroit donnée en propre, pour quelque raison que ce pût être ; mais que les revenus en appartiendroient au public !*”³

But enough of the blunders arising from ignorance.—I must now be permitted to set before the reader a few of the graver offences of wilful assumption and preposterous invention.

When Rienzi condemned some of the Barons to death, the Père thus writes ; I take the recent translation published by Mr. Whittaker :—

“The next day the Tribune, resolving more than ever to rid himself of his prisoners, ordered tapestries of two colours, red and white, to be laid over the place whereon he held his councils, and which he had made choice of to be the theatre of this bloody tragedy, as the extraordinary tapestry seemed to declare. He afterwards sent a cordelier to every one of the prisoners to administer the sacraments, and then ordered the Capitol bell to be tolled. At that fatal sound and the sight of the confessors, the Lords no longer doubted of sentence of death being passed upon them. They all confessed except the old Colonna, and many received the communion. In the meanwhile the people, *naturally prompt to attend, when their first impetuosity had time to calm, could not without pity behold the dismal preparations which were making. The sight of the bloody colour in the tapestry shocked them.* On this first impression they joined in opinion in relation to so many illustrious heads now going to be sacrificed, and lamented more their unhappy catastrophe, as no crime had been proved upon them to render them worthy of such barbarous treatment. *Above all, the unfortunate Stephen Colonna, whose birth, age, and affable behaviour, commanded respect, excited a particular compassion. An universal silence and sorrow reigned among them.* Those who were nearest Rienzi discovered an alteration. They took the opportunity of imploring his mercy towards the prisoners in terms the most affecting and moving.”

Will it be believed, that in the original from which the Père Du Cerceau borrows or rather imagines this touching recital, *there is not a single syllable about the pity of the people, nor their shock at the bloody colours of the tapestry, nor their particular compassion for the unfortunate Stephen Colonna !*—in fine, the *People* are not even mentioned at all. All that is said is “Some Roman citizens (alcuni cittadini Romani), considering the judgment Rienzi was about to make, interposed with soft and caressing words, and at last changed the opinion of the Tribune ;” all the rest is the pure fiction of the ingenious Frenchman ! Again, Du Cerceau, describing the appearance of the Barons at this fatal moment, says, “Notwithstanding the grief and despair visible in their countenances, *they showed a noble indignation, generally attendant on innocence in the hour of death.*” What says the authority from which alone, except his own, the good Father could take his account ? Why, not a word about this noble indignation, or this parade of innocence ! The original says simply, that “*the Barons were so frozen with terror that they were unable to speak,*” (diventaso si gelati che non poteano favellare ;) “that the greater part humbled themselves,” (e prese

¹ The English translator could not fail to adopt the Frenchman’s ludicrous mistake.

² See Preface to Zefrino Re’s edition of the “Life of Rienzi,” p. 9, note on Du Cerceau.

³ The English translator makes this law unintelligible :—“That no family of Rome shall appropriate to their own use what they think fit, but that the revenues shall appertain to the public” !!!—The revenues of what ?

penitenza e comunione :) that when Rienzi addressed them, "*all the Barons (come dannati) stood in sadness.*"¹ Du Cerceau then proceeds to state, that "although he (Rienzi) was grieved at heart to behold his victims snatched from him, he endeavoured to make a merit of it in the eyes of the People." *There is not a word of this in the original!*

So, when Rienzi, on a later occasion, placed the Prefect John di Vico in prison, this Jesuit says, "*To put a gloss upon this action* before the eyes of the people, Rienzi *gave out* that the Governor, John di Vico, keeping a correspondence with the conspirators, came with no other view than to betray the Romans." And if this scribbler, who pretends to have consulted the Vatican MSS., had looked at the most ordinary authorities, he would have seen that John di Vico *did* come with that view. (See for di Vico's secret correspondence with the Barons, La Cron. Bologn. p. 406; and La Cron. Est. p. 444.)

Again, in the battle between the Barons and the Romans at the gates, Du Cerceau thus describes the conduct of the Tribune:—"The Tribune, amidst his troops, knew so little of what had passed, that seeing at a distance one of his standards fall, he looked upon all as lost, and, casting up his eyes to heaven full of despair, cried out, 'O God, will you then forsake me?' But no sooner was he informed of the entire defeat of his enemies, than his dread and cowardice even turned to boldness and arrogance."

Now in the original all that is said of this is, "That it is true that the standard of the Tribune fell—the Tribune astonished (or if you please, dismayed, *sbigottio*), stood with his eyes raised to heaven, and could find no other words than, 'O God, hast thou betrayed me?'" This evinced, perhaps, alarm or consternation at the fall of his standard—a consternation natural, not to a coward, but a fanatic, at such an event. But not a word is said about Rienzi's cowardice in the action itself; it is not stated when the accident happened—nothing bears out the implication that the Tribune was remote from the contest, and knew little of what passed. And if this ignorant Frenchman had *consulted any other contemporaneous historian whatever*, he would have found it asserted by them all, that the fight was conducted with great valour, both by the Roman populace and their leader on one side, and the Barons on the other.—G. Vill. lib. xii. cap. 105; Cron. Sen. tom. xv. Murat. p. 119; Cron. Est. p. 444. Yet Gibbon rests his own sarcasm on the Tribune's courage solely on the baseless exaggeration of this Père Du Cerceau.

So little, indeed, did this French pretender know of the history of the time and place he treats of, that he imagines the Stephen Colonna who was killed in the battle above-mentioned was the *old* Stephen Colonna, and is very pathetic about his "venerable appearance," &c. This error, with regard to a man so eminent as Stephen Colonna the elder, is inexcusable; for, had the priest turned over the other pages of the very collection in which he found the biography he deforms, he would have learned that old Stephen Colonna was alive some time after that battle.—[Cron. Sen. Murat. tom. xv. p. 121.]

Again, just before Rienzi's expulsion from the office of Tribune, Du Cerceau, translating in his headlong way the old biographer's account of the causes of Rienzi's loss of popularity, says, "He shut himself up in his palace, and his presence was known only by the rigorous punishments which he caused his agents to inflict upon the innocent." Not a word of this in the original.

Again, after the expulsion, Du Cerceau says, that the Barons seized upon the "immense riches" he had amassed,—the words in the original are, "*grandi ornamenti*," which are very different things from immense riches. But the most remarkable sins of commission are in this person's account of the second rise and fall of Rienzi under the title of Senator. Of this I shall give but one instance:—

"The Senator, who perceived it, became only the more cruel. His jealousies produced only fresh murders. In the continual dread he was in, that the general discontent would terminate in some secret attempt upon his person, he determined to intimidate the most enterprising, by sacrificing sometimes one, sometimes another, and chiefly those whose riches rendered them the more guilty in his eyes. Numbers were sent

¹ See Vita di Col. di Rienzi, lib. i. cap. 29.

every day to the Capitol prison. Happy were those who could get off with the confiscation of their estates."

Of these grave charges there is not a syllable in the original! And so much for the work of Père Cerceau and Père Brumoy, by virtue of which historians have written of the life and times of Rienzi, and upon the figments of which, the most remarkable man in an age crowded with great characters is judged by the general reader!

I must be pardoned for this criticism, which might not have been necessary, had not the work to which it relates, in the English translation quoted from (a translation that has no faults but those of the French original), been actually received as an historical and indisputable authority, and opposed with a triumphant air to some passages in my own narrative which were literally taken from the authentic records of the time

THE END.

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